Week ending December 24 1949

Every Thursday Threepence

John Bull

HOW A GIRL BECOMES A NUN

by DENNIS HOLMAN

NEW GERALD KERSH SERIAL

In two darning needles lay...*words*

TELEGRAPHIC communication became possible in 1837, but at first messages could be sent only by Morse code. A Welshman, David Edward Hughes, a Professor of Music living in the United States, sought to invent an electrical apparatus that would transmit typed messages. One evening in 1855 he borrowed two darning needles from an old lady and began to use them as vibrators . . . Thus was born the telegraphic type-printer—the forerunner of the modern teleprinter.

The inventive spirit of Hughes is still alive in Britain today. The electricity industry, for instance, is continually developing new appliances which increase the output of our factories and farms and make life easier in the home. On the electricity supply side, too, marvels are being done to overcome the post-war power shortage. Already electricity may be used freely at all times except at peak hours. Soon the nation will be able to enjoy even greater benefits from the new electrical age.

The Electrical Development Association explores and advises on methods by which work on farms can be made easier by the application of electricity. Consult your Electricity Service Centre, write to E.D.A., 2 Savoy Hill, London, W.C.2.

All the Loveliest Young Film Stars now have *Pin-Up* perms

HAIR may be even a film star's crowning glory, but being a film star is hard on the hair. Studio lights dry it, make it brittle and hard to manage.

On public-appearance tours, away from film cameras and the attentions of the studio hairdresser, the young star's hair must still look its loveliest, well groomed and charmingly waved in her own style.

It is not to be wondered, then, that lovely young stars have welcomed a new kind of permanent waving—one that gives them, they say, soft, natural-looking waves which last for months. Pin-Up, they say, looks wonderful from the first. Why? Because it neither dries nor frizzes the hair.

DIANA DORS *(did you see her in DIAMOND CITY?) is thrilled with her Pin-Up. "It gives me just the loose, soft waves I like," she says, "lovely from the very first day!"*

HONOR BLACKMAN *(remember she was in DIAMOND CITY too) says Pin-Up is wonderful for hair like hers because it looks so natural. None of that baked, dried-up feeling!*

CAROL MARSH, *of THE ROMANTIC AGE and HELTER-SKELTER, says Pin-Up makes her hair so manageable it goes any way she wants it now!*

JANE HYLTON, *of PASSPORT TO PIMLICO fame, has a slight, natural wave in her chestnut hair, but she finds that Pin-Up gives her the sort of curl she likes for the ends.*

YOU, TOO, CAN HAVE SOFT, NATURAL-LOOKING WAVES WITH PIN-UP!

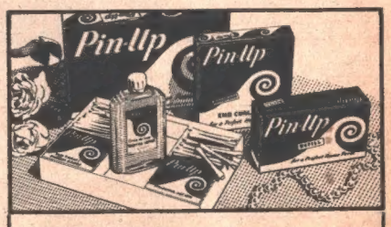
HERE'S the wonderful thing about it all—*you* can have a Pin-Up Home Perm as successfully as these lovely girls.

It's easy—as simple as putting your hair in curlers.

Just think what it will mean to have your hair looking glamorous *all* the time! No more of those awful "I-can't-afford-a-perm-yet" times.

Get Pin-Up. You'll be glad you did.

FOR CHRISTMAS: Someone you know will be delighted to have Pin-Up as a Christmas Gift. It's an exciting present!



SALON-TYPE Outfit with plastic curlers costs just 15/-. For future perms buy a Pin-Up **REFILL,** which costs a mere 7/6. **JUNIOR-SIZE** Pin-Up for end curls—only 5/-.

YOU, TOO, CAN BE A PERMANENT ***Pin-Up*** *GIRL!*

PIN 34-76

Relief from INDIGESTION

THANKS TO MACLEAN BRAND STOMACH POWDER

The wide popularity of Maclean Brand Stomach Powder is convincing evidence of its efficacy in relieving Heartburn, Flatulence, Nausea and Stomach Pains due to Indigestion.

Maclean Brand Stomach Powder. Price 1/8, 2/10 & 6/8
Also in Tablet Form
Maclean Brand Stomach Tablets. Price 1/8 & 2/10 and in Handy Pocket Pack 10d.
Only genuine if signed—"ALEX. C. MACLEAN"

MACLEAN Brand Stomach Powder

Alex. C. Maclean

New ideas to speed up our new homes

MORE THAN A MILLION new homes have been provided, in one way or another, since the war. That is good going, because crisis after crisis has interrupted the housing programme, and devaluation alone has caused a cut of £35 millions—the equivalent of between twenty and twenty-five thousand houses.

These setbacks are tragic to people who are still waiting for homes. But there is some small consolation in the useful practical experience which has been gained from the last few years of rehousing under difficulties.

Shortages of labour, materials and even money aren't the whole story. It has been found that by clever planning we can get far more homes from our limited resources than was realized at the end of the war.

A lot of cherished theories have had to be scrapped. It used to be thought, for example, that there was no choice except between building immense blocks of flats in the towns, or hundreds of thousands of little houses, each on its own plot, in the country.

The flats versus houses argument split the planning world from top to bottom, because it affected not only how you built, but where.

If the flat-builders won, there was no need to move people out of towns and start new housing estates in the country. Flats, holding far more families to the acre than individual houses, could be built on existing town sites.

But if large numbers of people were to be rehoused in "garden city" style—each family in its own cottage—it was obviously going to be necessary to spread the building schemes over many miles of new ground, and create many new communities.

The Government's admirable New Towns plan, which offers the ideal solution to this problem, has been delayed by the economic crises since 1947. Eleven New Towns are now blueprinted, with their Development Corporations set up, but none of them has yet risen from ground level.

So the New Towns must remain, for the moment, an interesting and promising experiment, and we come back to the problem of building as best we can to meet immediate needs.

So far, the greatest numbers of new homes are in the form of small houses, usually semi-detached, in existing towns or residential districts. The block of two, each with three bedrooms, has become the standard type of local authority housing.

In the towns, flat-blocks have generally diminished in height and increased in comfort. Three-storey blocks are now usually recognized as quite high enough for family living, and the old-fashioned "skyscraper" tenements are seldom repeated.

But in between these two standard types of housing—the semi-detached house and the medium-height flats—another alternative has emerged, won great success and earned the blessing of the Minister of Health. It is the terrace house.

Acceptance of this old type of home, improved and adapted to modern needs, amounts to a quiet revolution in the world of architects and planners.

"Terrace" is really a polite name for houses in rows. But not the old-fashioned, straight, identical, soulless rows which were rushed up cheaply in vast numbers during the last century to house the growing industrial population and which now disfigure every large town.

THE new terraces, designed and built with taste and imagination, can be exceedingly pleasant places.

They save a lot of space, are economical to erect (fewer outside walls) and easier to heat than detached or semi-detached homes. Even their road approaches can be more compact and therefore cheaper to construct and maintain than those of a lot of separate buildings, however closely packed.

So the terrace house, which can be adapted for either town streets or new estates in the country, seems to be a good working compromise, with many of the merits of both flats and cottages.

Experience with this comely and practical type of house building should bring down the present terribly high costs, and increase the number of separate new homes that can be provided in a given time.

But whether we are building cottages, flats or terraces, certain fundamental necessities remain. It goes without saying that there must be no jerry-building.

We have also to insist on housing that means more than four walls and a roof—housing which gives people of all classes and ages the chance of a decent life. All local authority plans must allow for adequate open spaces, playgrounds for children, plenty of light and air and greenery, and labour-saving devices to lift the load of drudgery which has made too many housewives old before their time.

We have to mix brains with our mortar, and put new ideas into the foundations of our new homes. This is the way, already proved by the success of terrace-housing, to get round the obstacles which still stand between many of the British people and the homes they desperately need.

JOHN BULL 189 HIGH HOLBORN LONDON W.C.1
DECEMBER 24, 1949 VOLUME 86 NUMBER 2269 PHONE: TEMPLE BAR 2468 GRAMS: HEROICALLY, WESTCENT, LONDON

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BUILDING SOCIETY

which this year celebrates its hundredth anniversary, is marking the occasion by a relaxation of its investment restrictions. Until further notice existing shareholders may add any sum to their share accounts, provided the total does not exceed £5,000. New shareholders may invest up to £5,000. (Husband and wife are considered as one for this purpose.)

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This is a Safety-First Investment 2¼% Income tax borne by the Society

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Don't let coughing floor you
Five short words of great renown
Provide the answer for you . . .

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GO—SUCK A ZUBE!

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ZUBES Regd.
ZUBES ARE BEST FOR THROAT & CHEST

DOLCIN—AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST RHEUMATIC AILMENTS

Sufferers from Rheumatism, Sciatica, Neuritis, Fibrositis, Lumbago and Gout can now secure PROMPT relief from the painful symptoms of these disorders.

DOLCIN has already succeeded in countless cases in this country and in America and Canada. Dolcin is recommended by Doctors and is used in clinics and hospitals.

The DOLCIN discovery provides a new approach to the problem of rheumatic ailments by combining calcium succinate and acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin) in a special way. Not only does Dolcin provide prompt relief from painful symptoms—it also gives PROLONGED relief because it contains substances which improve the supply of blood and oxygen to the affected areas.

DOLCIN is NON-TOXIC—it cannot harm the heart or any other organ and can be taken with safety over long periods in severe cases to eliminate rheumatic activity.

DOLCIN is stocked by your chemist in bottles of 100 tablets for 10s. and 500 tablets for 45s. including tax.

Be sure you get genuine Dolcin—the original and tested compound.

DOLCIN Reg. Trade Mark

DOLCIN, 110 JERMYN STREET, LONDON, S.W.1.

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are marvellous for the toe of every stocking

Now in gay Christmas wrappers

The finest cream comes from Devon . . . but the finest sauce comes from

SUTTONS

MASTER TOUCH SAUCE

1/3 PER BOTTLE

Makers of Fine Pickles, Canned Goods, Soft Drinks and "The Cream of Salad Creams."

Prompt relief *from* **ACIDITY...**

. . . . . can be counted on when 'Milk of Magnesia'* is ready to hand in the Medicine Cabinet. This quick acting antacid is especially comforting should you ever eat or drink unwisely, smoke too much or sit up too late. Being also a most effective laxative, 'Milk of Magnesia' will relieve the system — leaving you feeling clear-headed and so much fitter.

'Milk of Magnesia'

REGD. TRADE MARK*

Large size 3/2 — *equals* 3 *small size* 1/7

A PROVEN PRODUCT OF THE CHAS. H. PHILLIPS CHEMICAL CO., LTD.

Free Speech

PAY MORE FOR BRAINWAVES

HOW TRUE TO LIFE, I thought, when I saw your cartoon showing directors roaring with laughter at the contents of the staff's suggestion box (JOHN BULL, November 19). I have myself often joined in such managerial laughter, for many of the ideas offered are humorous beyond the wildest dreams of *Punch*.

But, once in a while, a gem comes along which is accepted and paid for. And, occasionally, of course, a good one gets mislaid and turns up in the manager's backyard.

Many clever brains lie fallow because of the unlikelihood that sound ideas will be adequately recognized. I remember a reward of £10 being offered for the solution to a problem dealing with the finishing operation on steel strip. Anyone knowing that particular answer could have sold it to one of three rival concerns for £10,000.—EX-MANAGER, Scarborough, Yorks.

Effect Of The Dog Collar

WHY DID THE CLERGYMAN in *The Miracle of Lot III* (JOHN BULL, December 3) travel in a clerical collar, only to discard it surreptitiously later? I think I know.

The clerical collar has both a repelling and a magnetic force. I have often travelled most comfortably on crowded trains, thanks to my collar. Prospective companions gape into the compartment, shrug and pass on.

But the "dog collar" never fails to attract beggars, ex-convicts and drunks on the scrounge. — CLERGYMAN, East Lothian.

Baby Can Remember

JEANNE BARRY'S story *Eye Witness* (JOHN BULL, November 26) raised the question whether a baby can remember things which it sees before it can talk. My youngest son, who is now eight, did not talk until he was three but he often speaks of things which occurred before he was two.—MRS. BATTY, School Hill, Bentham, Lancaster.

Most child psychologists agree that babies have clear memories even before they can talk. But the age at which memory begins has never been settled and seems to vary a great deal.

Cost Of Getting Married

THANKS FOR YOUR "Now You Know" feature on marriage (JOHN BULL, November 26). Hasn't the 1949 Finance Act altered the fees for a registry office marriage licence and for a special licence? —JOHN HURD, Dover, Kent.

Yes. Licence for a registry office marriage now costs £2 4s. 6d. Special licence, dispensing with residence and time qualifications, costs £20.

Christmas Rice Pudding

I HAVE LIVED IN Denmark for thirteen years and am still surprised at the old customs which survive. Rice plays an important part in the Danish Christmas, like the English Christmas pudding. The housewife makes a large dish of rice with just one almond in it and the lucky finder of the almond gets an extra Christmas present. In some country districts, a bowl of rice is still placed in stables and barns to placate evil spirits.

Christmas here begins on Christmas Eve. After dinner the tree is lit up, everybody marches round it singing hymns, and presents are handed round. Christmas Day and Boxing Day are for visiting. — ELSIE ANDERSON, Vangedevej 17al Gentofte, Denmark.

Running For Health

READING THE STORY OF Reg Gosney's rise from a frail boy to a champion athlete (JOHN BULL, December 3), prompts me to testify to the value of cross-country running. After two months in hospital with pneumonia in 1918, I took up running and have covered about 50,000 miles.

Just before an accident this summer, I was running fifty miles a week and am about to resume training now.

My age? Forty-nine. The prize? A clean bill of health for thirty years.—VIC LEWIS, Westbury Harriers, Bromham, Chippenham, Wilts.

Arguing With Pickles

Kathleen May

AS A GIRL of fourteen, I feel I am old enough to argue with Wilfred Pickles. I have never disagreed with his weekly articles before, but when I read what he had written about his visits to factories (JOHN BULL, December 3), I felt quite furious.

He said he didn't want to meet the managers or the foremen but the men with the spanners. He seems to forget that there are some men, like my father, who have worked twenty-two years before achieving the foreman's post. Wilfred would have enjoyed a talk with men like my father. — KATHLEEN MAY, 36 Woodville Avenue, Crosby, Liverpool.

. . . When I was a prisoner of war in England, I listened to *Have a Go!* every week. Now I am back in Germany I have JOHN BULL sent regularly and I am glad to hear more of the man who gives happiness to millions all over the world.—HANS GUNTER ROSEMEYER, Wasserweg 5, Bremen - Ronnebeck, British Zone of Germany.

How Children Keep Warm

MY OWN WARMLY-CLAD children are at this moment playing in a wintry garden and I wonder if there is some explanation for A. R. Thomson's cover picture showing children playing at a bus stop (JOHN BULL, November 26). The children are wearing summery clothes while the onlookers are muffled up in top coats and furs.—MRS. MARY STANDISH, Box Cottage, Tarrant Monkton, near Blandford, Dorset.

"But my picture is true to life," says A. R. Thomson. "I often see children warm in summery clothes while grown-ups are shivering in furs."

. . . Douglas Mays's Cover Kids have my full support over the card game uproar (JOHN BULL, December 3). Two aces of diamonds in one game certainly seem just cause for a difference of opinion. — E. OSBORN, 99 Laurel Crescent, Rush Green Road, Romford, Essex.

"Not in this case," says Mays. "The game is snap, played with two packs. Uproar is over who snapped first."

John Bull welcomes readers' views, experiences and ideas for publication. A guinea is paid for every letter used. Mark the envelope "Free Speech" and make sure your full name and address is in the letter

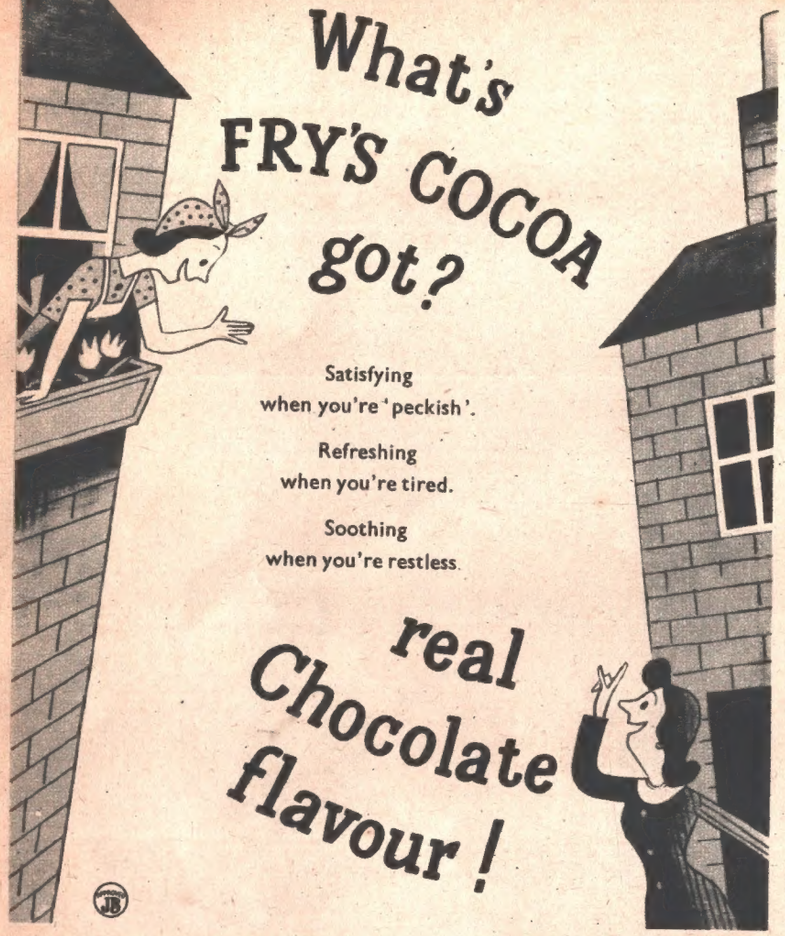
What's FRY'S COCOA got?

Satisfying
when you're 'peckish'.

Refreshing
when you're tired.

Soothing
when you're restless.

real Chocolate flavour!



Master OXO

makes a Tasty Pasty

CORNISH PASTY RECIPE

6 ozs. diced potatoes.
1 Oxo cube. Same size of butter or margarine.
4 ozs. diced turnips.
3 ozs. finely cut onion.
1 teaspoonful flour.
Salt and Pepper.

Make a pastry, roll out and cut to size and shape of a teaplate and damp edges. Melt butter or margarine, break Oxo cube and mix with it and then add the teaspoonful of flour. Mix well and then add about a dessertspoonful of tepid water to make into a fairly thick mixture. Place potato, turnip and onion on pastry and spread mixture, with salt and pepper to taste. Double over pastry to make pasty, crimp edges together, and bake in hot oven for half an hour.

If everyone could give everyone a hundred 'Player's' for Christmas how sensible Christmas presents would be . . .
PLAYER'S NAVY CUT

PLAYER'S NAVY CUT CIGARETTES · MEDIUM OR MILD · PLAIN OR CORK TIPPED · [NCC 7140]

40 FRAGRANT COFFEES FOR 1/10½D.

Much in demand for Christmas parties — this Cupkaff! And no wonder, for here's the finest and most fragrant ready-to-serve coffee you can buy. We make it from selected coffee beans, freshly roasted, ground and brewed, with chicory added to give a true continental accent to the flavour.

Cupkaff

ONLY 1/10½d.

Why Cupkaff makes MORE coffee

There is not a grain of waste in a whole jar of Cupkaff because it is coffee made soluble — coffee in a fine extra-concentrated powder, with chicory added for the real continental flavour. It contains no other ingredients to give bulk at the expense of strength. That's why you need only *half* a teaspoonful. THERE ARE 40 CUPS OF FRAGRANT FULL-STRENGTH COFFEE IN EACH JAR.

MADE IN THE CUP—SAVES WASHING UP!

Take not more than half a teaspoonful of Cupkaff, pour on boiling water, add milk and sugar to taste and there's a glorious cup of coffee for you!

less milk — less money — less time

ONE OF THE FAMOUS **RED, WHITE & BLUE** COFFEES

A 'regular' change in the character of Pessimistic Pete

"Go away," said Pete. "Jump off something high."
"Hey, hey," *I told him, "that's no way to talk."*
"It's the way I feel," he said. "A bloke can act merry just so long as his body lets him. Me, I've had it."
"Ten to one," *I informed him, "it's your 30 feet of inner tubing."*
"I beg your pardon?" he said.
"Inner tubes," *I repeated. "Your food has to pass through 30 feet of them. But what you get nowadays is so soft, the muscles can't grip."*
"Well," asked Pete, "what happens then?"
"Nothing," *I said, "that's the trouble. You feel ill, that's all. Don't stop hoping, though. Kellogg's All-Bran . . ."*
"Hold it!" said Pete. "Kellogg's All-Bran is no medicine—it's a breakfast food."
"Clever boy!" *I said. "It is a food—delicious, too. But it also adds bulk to your diet, for muscles to take hold of. Makes you regular inside a week."*
"Sez you!" said Pete. But he was looking thoughtful.
That was Friday week. This morning, something hits me between the shoulder-blades.
"Old man," said Pete, "Kellogg's All-Bran is a marvel! Just one week—and look!"
"You'll do," *I said.*

KELLOGG'S ALL-BRAN relieves constipation trouble, keeps you "regular." Made from rich outer layers of whole wheat deliciously oven-toasted with malt, salt and sugar. Makes a splendid breakfast, and many appetizing cakes, buns and surprise dishes. 7½d. a packet from your grocer.

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WHITBREAD'S STOUT

is beer

FOREST BROWN ALE

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THE 'POPULAR' TUMBLER

These famous Jacobean Glass Tumblers are now made in five useful sizes, all to match and very modestly priced:—

Cocktail glass	2 *ounce*	4d.
Spirit „	4 *ounce*	5d.
Wine „	6⅔ *ounce*	6d.
Water „	8 *ounce*	7d.
Beer „	10 *ounce*	8d.

From Retailers only, but in short supply at home owing to export demand. Prices slightly higher in Northern Ireland.

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You can always enjoy Weston's Oval Arrowroot

With the early cup of tea, with morning coffee, at 4 o'clock and very last thing. Not too plain, not too sweet, and easy to digest. Made from the finest ingredients obtainable, and sent from the factories, oven-fresh and temptingly crisp.

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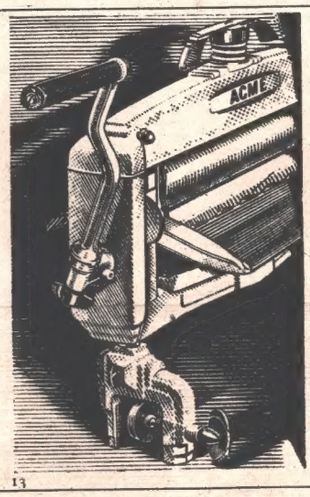

DON'T BUY A PIG IN A POKE!

And that goes for lots of things these days, wringers for example! Many on the market are newcomers and comparatively unknown. They may be good—again they may not be. Why risk it when you can get an ACME with seventy years of manufacturing experience behind it. ACME is the only CLEANSER-WRINGER too, and Acme has a name which is your guarantee that you're getting the finest there is. Over four million Acmes have been sold already! Pretty good proof that ACME gives the best results.

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PHOSFERINE for a *new* appetite!

PHOSFERINE is a grand restorative when reserves have run down. When the appetite fails, the vital resources of the body are not replaced. Mental and physical energy sag. Resilience weakens. The cheerful rebound to life's difficulties deserts you. It is within the power of PHOSFERINE to reverse this process—by reviving the appetite it creates new energy and vitality. You feel a new interest in life. Try this grand tonic today.

1/6 and 3/8
In liquid or tablet form.

THE GREATEST OF ALL TONICS

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John Bull colour photograph by William Kemp

Sister Annunciata (right) may miss home at Christmas, but mostly she's too busy to miss her past life

How a girl becomes a NUN

by ***DENNIS HOLMAN***

To give and not to count the cost . . .

AT ENDSLEIGH TRAINING COLLEGE in Hull, 180 young women are studying to become schoolteachers. Among them are a number of young student nuns from convents and Orders all over England. One of the nuns is a slight young woman with green eyes and a ready smile. They call her Sister Mary Annunciata.

The course of studies at Endsleigh takes two years in which a lot of new ground has to be covered quickly. The tempo is lively, with students in blouses and nigger shorts, pink and energetic on the hockey field, the tennis courts, in the gymnasium.

But Sister Mary Annunciata takes little part in the recreational activities of the college. She has her own life to live in a house reserved for student nuns, and she is up early every morning, praying, meditating, doing little jobs, while the students who are not nuns are obliged only to be at breakfast. She has to take her studies much more seriously. Though teaching may be just a job the average girl does until she gets married, Sister Annunciata will teach all her life.

Not A Penny Payment

The rest of her days will be devoted to rising generations of Roman Catholic children or, for that matter, children of any denomination handed into her care. She is twenty-four and she has renounced married life, motherhood and ordinary freedom to do just this work. And she will never be paid a penny for doing it.

Sister Mary Annunciata was born in Loughmore, Co. Tipperary, and christened Eileen McGrath. Her father was a farmer, whose land lies in the lush Golden Vale. There he raised six children, three boys and three girls. Eileen was the second youngest.

Her childhood memories shape round Loughmore—the house where they lived; the farmyard; the horse and trap in which they drove to Mass on Sundays; the ruins of an old Norman castle that stood in their grounds. Generations of McGrath children have played at the castle. Eileen played there, too, but she was also a bookish child, fond of reading and of her school lessons at the Convent of Mercy in Templemore. As a girl Eileen did not seem any more religious than her friends or classmates, but one day her

Whatever the task, Sister Annunciata (right) must concentrate—no day-dreaming. Her life is completely ordered

brother said something that terrified her. "Sure," he said, "Eileen is going to be a nun." He was half joking.

At a certain age almost every young Catholic girl thinks seriously about the cloisters. Eileen had shunned the idea. "I didn't want to become a nun," she says. "I loved the sun on my face and the wind in my hair. But something was drawing me towards the religious life. In spite of myself I knew I would be a nun in the end."

Her thoughts made her afraid of nuns. Sometimes if she saw them coming along the road, she would hide in a shop until they went by, then follow well behind, secure in the knowledge that nuns never look back.

Two Would Be Company

Had the initiative been left to her, Eileen might still be in Loughmore, with a job like one sister, maybe married like the other. Whatever she felt about her future she certainly said nothing of it to her parents or the sisters in the convent. But Eileen had a confidante, a girl of her own age, a neighbour and a classmate. Her name was Peggy Ryan.

Peggy, too, had thought about becoming a nun, but the idea of leaving home forever had terrified her. "If only we could become nuns together," Eileen had once said, "it wouldn't be so lonely."

Often they discussed the vocation, the Order they'd like to join, the sort of religious life they'd like to follow. There was a lot to choose from.

They could become entirely enclosed and contemplative as Carmelites, Benedictines or Visitation nuns. Or as Bon Secours, Little Sisters of the Assumption, Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul, Handmaids of Mary and in many other similar Orders they could dedicate their lives to the relief of the poor and sick; reform young women and protect girls in danger of falling; or conduct holiday and convalescent homes and houses for business girls.

But Eileen and Peggy felt they wanted to be teachers, and here, too, was a wide choice of Orders and habits —Ursulines, Daughters of Wisdom, Sisters of Mary, Sisters of Notre Dame, Jesus and Mary Sisters, Benedictines of the Immaculate Conception, Dominicans, Franciscans, Brigidines, Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Daughters of the Cross of Liége. . . .

One day two sisters arrived from England. They had come looking for postulants. The entire school assembled in the hall, and the girls were given a talk on the life and work of the Sisters of Mercy.

If any girls had romantic notions about the cloistered life, these should be dispelled immediately, they were told. The life was monotonously one of work and prayer. But if any girl still felt that this was indeed the life God had ordained for her, she might find her true vocation as a nurse or teacher in the Order of Mercy.

The Order had been founded in 1831 by Catherine McAuley, of Dublin, who was left £30,000 and used the legacy to build a shelter for poor children. Here she had lived with a few devout women and worked with them, visiting the hospitals, taking care of distressed women, looking after and teaching waifs and strays.

Ultimately this charitable work had come to the notice of the religious authorities, who had investigated the matter and given Mother McAuley and her "sisters" the option of becoming a congregation of religious.

Wherever English Is Spoken

Mother McAuley died in 1839. The same year two of her Order founded a convent in Bermondsey. Others went to Birmingham, Newfoundland and New York, established houses and later established more, until now, a century later, Convents of Mercy are to be found in every English-speaking country of the world.

The story of the Order was simple and impressive, but what made the greatest impact on Eileen McGrath's imagination was Catherine McAuley's definition of what a Sister of Mercy should do. Adapted from St. Francis Xavier's ideal for a religious, the definition reads: "To give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not to seek for rest, save as her holy Rule directs, at the foot of God's holy altar."

Goodbye To Gay Frocks

Eileen and Peggy were then seventeen and old enough to become postulants. It was Peggy who spoke to the sisters after the lecture, with Eileen hanging back, too shy to make a move, and too worried because of the shock it might be to her parents.

But when they were told, neither Ned McGrath nor his wife objected to their daughter becoming a nun, and soon after the postulants left for England with the two Sisters of Mercy.

At St. Joseph's Convent, Wanstead, Eileen and Peggy parted with their summer frocks for the black dress, cap and veil of the postulant. The first phase of their religious lives had begun —six months of household work in the convent, helping as pupil teachers in the school, meditating and praying for assistance in making the great future decision. They were on probation, as it were, while the Superior formed an opinion as to whether they really had a vocation.

After six months the postulants took white veils as novices, beginning the first year, the spiritual year of their novitiate. The emphasis was now on prayer, meditation, study of their vows, the scriptures, the religion, the lives of the saints. But there was also work enough to roughen their hands.

They rose every morning at six, washed and dressed in twenty minutes, read the Divine Office in the chapel and meditated until Mass began at seven thirty. A silent breakfast followed (no talking was permitted at meals except on feast days), then the cleaning of the convent until ten o'clock, another half-hour's meditation, and minding of children at play for the rest of the morning.

Lunch was followed by study, that by needlework, that by recreation in the recreation room, where talking was allowed and there were a radio, gramophone and books. More meditation till the evening Office, the evening meal, more study and finally bed at nine fifteen.

After the second year a novice makes her temporary profession, taking a black veil and the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience for three years. During this period she has to make up her mind. She understands her vows and must pray for guidance and spend many hours searching her soul for signs of her true vocation. As Father Bernard Vaughan once said: "If married couples had the long engagement that nuns have, there would be no divorces."

The final vows are for life. A girl has five and a half years to prepare for them, during which time she is free to leave whenever she wants. Eileen McGrath decided to take her vows. Peggy Ryan did not. When the time came Peggy felt she hadn't the vocation.

The Superior said of her later: "The child was in doubt. I told her to pray and I prayed with her. And God directed us. There is nothing sadder than a spoilt vocation, and there is no doubt more terrible than that doubt. She left with a heavy heart. But her spiritual training had strengthened her. God intends her for other things."

Meanwhile Eileen McGrath became Sister Mary Annunciata—all nuns take the name Mary in honour of Our Blessed Lady; the second name is chosen for them by the Superior. The profession ceremony is simple and intimate, attended by the clergy and a few lay relatives who may be invited.

The service is conducted by a bishop. The nuns prostrate themselves at the foot of the altar in submission to the Divine Will; and a silver ring is slipped on their wedding ring fingers as a reminder of their vows and their marriage to God.

Sister Mary Annunciata stepped out of the chapel a professed nun.

The Penalty For Quitting

Time was when a bishop as an exceptional, terrible example, could condemn a nun to be walled up alive for breaking her vows, but no secular or ecclesiastical authority today can restrain her if she suddenly decides to put off her habit, don a dress and walk out.

This very rarely happens, but the penalty for such an act would be excommunication, involving exclusion from the sacraments while living and refusal of Christian burial after death.

Excommunication is automatic. According to her beliefs she couldn't practise her religion except as a nun without making sacrilege of the sacraments. Her prayers, too, would be unacceptable.

The Pope can only dispense a nun from her vows in extreme cases—perhaps when the rigours of the life are proved to be affecting her mind.

The day Sister Mary Annunciata made her vows, her black wavy hair was cropped short, and she was wearing a habit of the sort she would wear for life—a black serge dress, leather cincture, white linen guimp and coif,

Continued on page 30

JACK OF SWORDS

by GERALD KERSH

ILLUSTRATED BY STEVEN SPURRIER, A.R.A.

What species of a mutton-head did these cronies of Cazac's think him? Finding himself followed, Ratapoil decided he would have to teach the clods a lesson

RATAPOIL, EX-MAJOR of Napoleon's army, swashbuckling, devil-may-care Ratapoil, has fallen on evil times. Out of favour with the "Little Man's" autocratic Government—the "Little Man" himself away on his disastrous war with Russia—Ratapoil is just one more of the down-at-heel ex-aristocrats who haunt the little cafés of Paris.

Then, down to his last sou, he meets Cazac—Cazac, the little swindler whom he knew and despised in better times. Cazac has fine clothes, a full purse—and twenty gold coins for Ratapoil, if Ratapoil will come in with him in a desperate enterprise.

A coup is being planned. A certain general is to be released from jail. . . . But Cazac will tell him no more. If Ratapoil is interested, he must present himself at a certain address at a certain time, in his best clothes. He is to meet *very* important people. Ratapoil agrees.

After a lucky night at the gaming tables, he redeems his pawned clothes and pistols, meets Tessier, an old friend, to whom he tells his news, gets Louise, his landlady's daughter (who is in love with him), to valet his clothes, and sets out for his appointment.

PART II

The Plot

CAZAC was waiting for him in the thickly carpeted vestibule of Switzer's Restaurant, inconspicuously dressed in a high-waisted black coat and blue trousers. "Ratapoil, as God's my judge, I'd never have recognized you!" he said. "You are magnificent!"

He said this in an undertone. Ratapoil replied in a whisper: "What's this, pig's head? *Two* new suits? Upon my word!"

"Ssh!"

A bowing attendant took Ratapoil's hat and reached for his cane. "Excuse me, I'll keep this," said Ratapoil. "I have, you see, a slight deformity of the hip—I need this cane."

Cazac took his arm, and as they climbed the stairs, which were covered with some stuff that felt like velvet, said, urgently: "Ratapoil, for God's sake be discreet. You're going to meet two very important men. One of them is M. Lemoine: he will be the one dressed all in black, clean shaven, with thick eyebrows and a blue chin—very pale—bald on top—tall, thin; turned-up nose. A formidable man. The other one, the one with the stomach, who looks like a little bull, is Boutreux. Do your best to make a good impression on them."

"Oh, to the Devil with that!" said Ratapoil. "Are these your great men, your bankers, your dealers in the game in which you are a deuce and I am a Jack of Espadas?"

"Not exactly," said Cazac.

"What in the Devil's name *is* all this?" said Ratapoil, raising his voice.

"Be quiet," whispered Cazac, opening the door, and they were in a small private dining-room above the main restaurant.

The little room, lined with mirrors, was full of the light and the heat of twenty wax candles and a fire of logs. M. Lemoine, with discreetly lifted coat-tails, was warming himself at this fire; he had the peaked look of a thin-blooded man, but none the less dangerous for that, Ratapoil thought, as he glanced at him. Lemoine's eyes were round and black, like berries embedded in the wax of his face—neither dull nor bright, but coldly, dully reflective.

Boutreux, you might have thought, could have wrung Lemoine like a wet shirt and put him in his pocket. He was a florid, powerful man with an out-thrust chest, a pouting mouth, and heavy rust-coloured whiskers. He reminded Ratapoil of a blustering inspector of police; *I could handle that one standing on my head,* he said to himself. But he greeted them very politely, and then another man came in.

"Ah, M. Rateau," said Cazac. "Major Ratapoil, this gentleman is M. Rateau."

Rateau was a very large, muscular man; but there was something wrong with his face. Upon such a neck as his one expected to see, for instance, a head like Ratapoil's — something craggy, rugged, battered, heroic. Rateau's features were delicate. He had a clear skin, a thin nose and a sensitive mouth shaded by nothing but a trace of a moustache.

Looking at Rateau's whiskers, Ratapoil smiled and instinctively stroked his own—he had seen girls in Naples who could show a better pair of whiskers. Then, noticing something familiar in the carriage of the man, he came close to him and (feeling happily reckless) said: "Attention!" — whereupon M. Rateau drew himself up stiffly for a moment, pressing his palms against his thighs.

"I thought so," said Ratapoil, laughing. "Since when are you *Monsieur*? By the look of you you are some sort of a non-commissioned officer. What's your rank, eh?"

"Corporal, sir," said Rateau, with a lopsided smile.

"All right, my man. As long as I know. Are you a deserter, eh? Eh? Are you, eh?"

M. Lemoine said: "Ah, dinner. Dinner, gentlemen. Now that we are all acquainted, let us spend a sociable evening with pleasure and, let us hope, profit."

So they went to the table and ate and drank until, when the table was cleared, the waiters were gone, and the five men were sipping their brandy, Boutreux locked the door and said: "Gentlemen, business!"

HE cleared his throat in the manner of a man who is going to make a speech, but it was Lemoine who spoke to Ratapoil. He said: "We have heard a great deal about you, Major Ratapoil."

"Oh, you know how people talk, M. Lemoine. There are all kinds of tales about me in circulation. I have achieved what you might call a sort of notoriety."

"Let us say, rather, fame," said M. Lemoine, putting his fingertips together. "Fame, M. Ratapoil."

"You are too kind, Father," said Ratapoil humbly.

"Not at all, my son." This was not consciously said—it slipped out of M. Lemoine's mouth and escaped before he could press his lips together.

"Ahah, I guessed that you were a sort of priest," cried Ratapoil.

M. Lemoine curved his mouth in a tight, pale smile, while his round, dull black eyes seemed steadily to look at nothing. He said: "You are one of the old breed, I believe?"

Ratapoil laughed, and said: "Old breed? Old as the hills! Everyone has heard of the de Ratapoils. Sir, we are an aristocratic family *soit-disant*. I believe that there was a de Ratapoil with Bohemund in the attack on Antioch, during the Crusades. There was a de Ratapoil at Crècy; there was a de Ratapoil at Agincourt; there was a de Ratapoil at Malplaquet—the de Ratapoils have run away from some of the most notable engagements in history; present company excepted, of course. Why, speaking of breeds, if about seven uncles and thirty-five cousins fell dead tonight I might call myself the Viscount de Ratapoil tomorrow. There is always hope—one good epidemic of smallpox might do the trick," said Ratapoil, draining his glass.

"Yet you served the Emperor well," said M. Lemoine.

"With all my heart and soul," said Ratapoil.

"But not because you loved him, naturally?"

"Loved him? I never gave a damn for him. I was a soldier, quite simply, because it is my nature to be a soldier. I served the Little Man because he was my commander. I served him because I had sworn to serve him, you understand. But it was not for the Corsican that I was fighting. I was fighting for France. I think I see what you are getting at. You are going, by a very

Cazac: the swindler who introduced Ratapoil to a dangerous game

Ratapoil thought: hunted men do not slink into alleys to hide under lighted lamps. His follower passed him by

roundabout way, to ask me where my loyalty is.

"Well, let me tell you something, Father, or Monsieur, or whatever you are: Never approach me in a roundabout way. I'll tell you without your asking. Here it is. My word being pledged, I'd have served Napoleon with my last breath—I'd have covered him with my body against the bayonets of the English Grenadiers. I joined the army seventeen years ago, by God, before I started to shave. I was with him in Italy. I was by his side in the affair of Vendemiare. I was at Marango and Austerlitz. Get this clear in your mind, Monsieur Father; when my word is pledged I keep it. Well, now I have no word to keep with the Little Man. I am out of the army. I am wounded, I have fever, I am old before my time, and poor as a church mouse——"

"You want money?" said Boutreux.

RATAPOIL shrugged. "Badly. But not money taken in the dark. I know that you want me. I know that you have the wherewithal to pay me. I know that you are playing a big, deep game. I also know," said Ratapoil, "that this great oaf who calls himself Monsieur Rateau, who eats a sole as if he were scooping up Spanish brown beans from a tin plate on the blade of a knife—this heavyweight here, who has been got up to look like a gentleman, in civilian clothes that he has no right to wear—has been invited to sit with his betters in order to protect you. Disabuse yourself of any illusion in that connection. If this is a fair game and a good gamble, I am with you. Only you must put your cards on the table, or there's no deal."

"Yes," said Cazac, nodding at Boutreux and Lemoine.

Boutreux cleared his throat again, without speaking looked at Lemoine, who said: "Major Ratapoil, before talking of this affair we must ask you to swear a solemn oath——"

"I won't swear it," said Ratapoil. "I don't go in for religion, and I don't swear oaths to anything, therefore. Take me into your confidence and, whatever your proposal is, whether I accept it or not, I give you my word that I'll be discreet. And that, Monsieur Father, is as good as the seal of the Confession. Take it or leave it."

"We take it," said Boutreux. "Eh, M. Lemoine?"

M. Lemoine nodded and continued: "Your word is good enough, Major Ratapoil. I think I am something of a judge of men. Very well then; first of all, here is a piece of news which will startle you. It will shake the whole world, when we release it. For the moment, however, if we are to profit by it, it must be a secret. Napoleon Bonaparte is dead."

"What?"

"Napoleon is dead in Russia, of an inflammation of the lungs. We received the news the other day, by special courier."

Ratapoil picked up one of the candlesticks and lit a long cigar. Lemoine, Boutreux, Cazac and Rateau watched him, but he showed no emotion.

He inhaled the fragrant smoke and said: "Mm-mm! American tobacco! Smuggled stuff, eh? . . . I beg your pardon, I am interrupting. What was that you said? The Little Man dead? I'll believe it when I smell him, not before. I was with Napoleon in Italy and in Egypt, and mark my words, that little fellow was not born to die on a battlefield—he'd always be out of it just one little jump ahead. *Credat Apella Judaeus*—in other words, tell it to your grandmother."

"We are quite sure. Our information——"

"*We?* Who the Devil are *we*?" said Ratapoil. "Who are you to have special

couriers and relays of three-horse sleighs and fresh horses posted over fifteen hundred miles from Russia to Paris to tell you the latest news? What do you want it for? Be frank with me."

"I told you, he is no fool," said Cazac to Boutreux, who looked at Lemoine and nodded.

M. Lemoine said: "Why, Major Ratapoil, you must know that, once it is known that the Emperor is dead, there will be what you might call a rush of blood to the head in France; a sort of apoplexy. No, that is not a good image; I should have said, a rush of blood to where a head ought to be—a species of haemorrhage—an emptying of the arteries. Napoleon was the head. That head is cut off. We must clap another head on quickly before the wound begins to hurt and all the blood runs out."

"You put it very neatly. Go on."

"The Emperor died, as I told you, of an inflammation of the lungs. Now he was not above criticism, Major Ratapoil, but it must be admitted that Napoleon was no fool. While he was dying he realized that there must be a strong, cool man at the head of an empire and its army. He nominated one before he died—and now you see why our courier road to death a dozen horses between Omsk and Paris. I know that I must be frank with you, Major Ratapoil, so I tell you here and now: our business is half diplomatic, half violent. The diplomatic department is ours——"

"Ah. And the violent, that is to say the dangerous department, is mine, is that it? But tell me another thing," said Ratapoil. "If the Little Man is dead, and has appointed a successor, what the devil is all the secrecy for? Why don't you shout: 'The King is dead, long live the King!' Why meet in restaurants if you have your facts and your documents?"

"Consider," said M. Lemoine, "this is a very dangerous game. With Napoleon dead, every ambitious man in France will be spurring to Paris—formidable men. Popular men. There is Ney, for example——"

Hot on the chase, Ratapoil still found himself thinking of Louise

NODDING vigorously, Ratapoil broke in: "A good man, Ney. He doesn't give a curse for his own life or anyone else's. Fears neither God nor devil. A rough handful is Marshal Ney. But what are you talking about? If there's fighting still to be done, Ney will be there to see it through to the end. I know him. You must not take me for a complete fool, Monsieur Father."

"My name is Lemoine, Major Ratapoil."

"Incidentally, I don't believe that, either. Come to the point. If Napoleon is really dead (and I find that a very hard pill to swallow) who *has* he nominated as his successor?" asked Ratapoil.

Monsieur Lemoine said: "What would you say if I told you that Napoleon Bonaparte's successor is not merely poor, and comparatively obscure and unpopular, but is under arrest and in disgrace? What would you say to that?"

"In brief, Monsieur Father, and as politely as possible, I should say that it was a lot of eyewash, impossible."

"Even if I put documentary evidence before you?"

"*Especially* if you put documentary evidence before me," said Ratapoil, helping himself to cognac. "I know my little Corsican. Corsican to the backbone, double-dyed: never forgets, never forgives. And do you expect me to believe that he'd take a fellow out of jail whom he'd got his knife into and put him at the head of France and the Empire? My name is Ratapoil, monsieur, not Simple Simon. Now shall I tell you exactly what my own guess is?"

"If you please," said Monsieur Lemoine.

"As I see it, it's like this: Napoleon is the devil of a long way away. Everyone knows, now, that in this Russian affair he has bitten off more than he can chew. All sorts of rumours are flying around the cafés and the clubs. There is a certain amount of uneasiness among people who are in the know—or think that they are in the know. This is just about the right time for a nice little *coup d'état*.

"If you faked your news cleverly enough and spread it carefully enough, you might get your opponent to drop his guard for just as long as it would take for one good lunge straight to the heart. That, I think, is what you are up to. I think your story of special couriers and convenient documents is nothing but a lot of cock and bull. You, and whoever is behind you, are out to snatch France. This is my guess: I have put two and two together—that you propose to whisk General Malet out of La Force, stick him at the head of the army; grab the Departments, and seize France. Well?"

"And if that were so?" asked Boutreux, "what would you say?"

"Why, it *could* be done," said Ratapoil, "given perfect timing, exact organization, clever leadership, very brave men, and the Devil's own luck. Given all that, the odds might not be much more than five or six hundred to one against you. The Chiefs of Departments—the ones that get all the latest news—are so full of contradictory rumours that they don't know whether they are standing on their heads or their feet. Burst in on them with a good, clean-cut air of authority and bang down an important looking document, and they would take your imprint like soft wax under the seal. The newspapers, too. Yes, upon my soul, one *might* bring it off. Well?"

"You are a very astute man, Major Ratapoil," said Monsieur Lemoine. "With a head like yours, you deserve to be the Marshal of France."

"Oh, I never was ambitious," said Ratapoil. "I ask little of life. Make me a general, and chevalier of two or three exclusive Orders; give me a modest little home that requires no more than at the most seven or eight servants including a pretty housekeeper; a dozen or fifteen changes of clothes, three or four tastefully served meals a day, a little cellar of good wine, and a few thousand louis d'or over and above my general's pay to lose at the tables or lend to my friends; and I am perfectly content. I never aspire to be a Murat, a Bernadotte, or a Massena. My wants are few."

"You're with us then?" said Monsieur Lemoine.

"Yes, of course," said Ratapoil easily, "to the hilt! But you know, of course, that our chances are most damnably slender. You don't think for one moment, do you, that nothing but ink will be spilled in this affair? Even if we take the first trick and get Paris there will be some fighting to do. We still have the cream of the army to contend with——"

"Frostbitten, dead beat," said Boutreux. "Disillusioned."

CHUCKLING, rubbing his hands, Ratapoil said: "Yes, but you don't know those old *grognards* as I do. They would run to hell for Napoleon. No, no, it will be a war within a war—dog eat dog. Blood will flow like water. And then, of course, there is England. Once we are at one another's throats, I lay you one hundred to six the English invade France."

"Even if, having overthrown the Usurper, we make peace?" said Monsieur Lemoine, quietly.

"Oh, of course, I see. In that case, England would be our ally. Germany, too. Everybody, in fact," said Ratapoil. "We fill the seat of the throne of France with its rightful Bourbon bottom, and there we are. . . . It's a nice dream, gentlemen . . . don't nod at me, Corporal Rateau. Yes, I'll dream with you, and let us drink to that. Here's to my general's epaulettes; touching the matter of which, may I have a little money on account?"

Lemoine took out a purse and gave it to Ratapoil, saying: "No doubt Monsieur Cazac delivered fifty napoleons to you, as instructed; but here are another hundred."

"Housekeeping money. Thanks," said Ratapoil. Glancing at Cazac he said: "You and I will have a word later, my dear friend. . . . Now tell me, Monsieur Father, what is the next move? Give me details."

"We can't tell you now," said Boutreux. "There is another gentleman whom you must meet. Will you have the goodness to come here, to this same room, at noon tomorrow?"

"Oh, my God," said Ratapoil. "Who leads whom? Who directs operations? After this, gentlemen—and Corporal Rateau—I deal only with principals. Too many cooks spoil the broth. Discretion is all very well but I don't like too many mysteries. I am beginning to think that this conspiracy is getting to be just a little too elaborate. Very well, I'll be here. Thanks for a good dinner, and *au revoir*." On his way to the door, Ratapoil paused, smiling and said: "I suppose that if I had indignantly repulsed your extremely irregular advances, your idea was that I should not leave this room alive. Eh?"

"Yes," said Boutreux.

"I know," said Ratapoil genially. "I have had a corner of my eye on that bird-headed idiot of a Rateau all the time. He has had his right hand under his coat tails ever since we lit our cigars; every muscle gave him away . . . listen you, Rateau: and look at this—see—this pistol is out of my pocket and cocked, with my finger on the trigger, before you have the gumption to move. I was watching you in the mirror. Thank your lucky stars you made no sudden movement; because if you had, as sure as I stand here, someone would have been put to the trouble of scooping all your brains off the carpet with a salt spoon. Mirrors!" said Ratapoil, with disgust. "I hope I have not committed myself to work with imbeciles. . . . Well, till tomorrow, and then to work."

BEFORE closing the door he thrust his head back into the room, grinning under his hooked nose like an amiable Punchinello, and said: "Oh, gentlemen! See what I mean? Your little Rateau has had his fist on the butt of his pistol all the time, and his hand is wet and slippery. He has probably perspired all over the priming-pan. Even if it went off, he'd miss a cow at five paces. And this is what the Guards are coming to, is it? Upon my word of honour, when I am a general I must take the infantry in hand. Good night."

The door closed. Boutreux looked at Rateau, who was staring dumbly at the jamb of the door where Ratapoil's face had been; his expression was one of stunned adoration. Boutreux exchanged nods with M. Lemoine, who said: "you are right, Cazac—that man will stop at nothing."

Ratapoil went downstairs, smiling widely and whistling through his teeth; saying to himself: *Aha, life begins again!* While the powerful, foolish Rateau (whom Ratapoil had seen wiping his moist hand on his hip) looked at the priming of his pistol, and blushed.

"What the devil are you standing there for, like a stuck pig?" cried Boutreux, furiously.

"Pardon, sir. Excuse me, gentlemen. All of a sudden I felt like a raw recruit

again. The gentleman was right about this pistol. The priming really *is* damp," said Rateau.

"The gentleman was right when he said that you are an idiot," said Boutreux.

"Yes, sir. But I'm glad he's for us. It would be worse to have him against us than . . . than a squadron of Polish cavalry," said Rateau, in his serious, boyish voice.

M. Lemoine smiled and said: "A satisfactory evening, Boutreux. Thank you, Cazac, you have done very well. Come, now; let us go."

"To the place in the Blind Alley?" said Cazac.

"Yes," said Boutreux. "Not you, Rateau. Off with you for the present, and don't forget to change your clothes. I'll tell you when I want you. Come, then, if we're going. . . ."

MEANWHILE, Ratapoil, pausing to draw a deep breath in Switzer's doorway before going on his way, saw something moving in a dark doorway across the street. It was as if an oblong of night had come loose. But some stray ray of candle-light, sneaking through a division in Switzer's curtains, revealed that this shifting shadow had something like a face. Aha! he said to himself. The night has eyes, is that it?

He strolled, whistling loud and tunelessly, as a drunken man whistles, to the next corner—but listening as drunken men do not listen. Someone was following him. Now who will this be? he wondered. Friend or foe? He stopped at a café to relight his cigar; loitered over a little glass of brandy, and then, admirably simulating spasmodic hurry, lurched unsteadily out.

Staggering back over his tracks until he found a dark doorway, he made a retching noise — *bouah!* — and, as he expected, a man in dark clothes started out of the darkness and glided into the street. Few men can stand that sort of surprise assault. Even Ratapoil, who could walk up to the yawning muzzle of a hostile cannon that was about to spew grapeshot, would leap aside in terror if a drunken man leaned towards him and began to make convulsive noises.

"Pardon," stammered Ratapoil, gulping. "Damned oysters at Switzers . . . never go there . . . damned scoundrel . . . again—*Uh-uh-uh*——" Then he half-walked, half-fell, to the corner and, as soon as he knew that he was out of sight, ran swiftly on tiptoe up the rue Vielle des Cuirassiers. The other man —if he were not a complete imbecile—would allow at least fifteen or twenty seconds to pass before he took up the chase and rounded the corner. So Ratapoil ran sixty yards to the next corner, and ducked under a low-hanging street-lamp, into the dark and narrow alley called La Pipette.

There, he stepped into the cobbled entrance of an old, rotting tenement, flattening himself against the wall, and watching. Less than half a minute passed before the man in dark clothes appeared under the lamp and paused, looking up and down the larger street. He hesitated only a moment; then turned and walked into La Pipette—exactly as Ratapoil had expected.

Now, let us see which is the cat and which the mouse, said Ratapoil; and strode solemnly out of his place in the dark, brushed the other man aside with a brusque apology, and went back to the street-lamp where he, in his turn, paused and blew his nose very loudly into a large yellow silk handkerchief, which he flourished in the dim light before he put it back in his coat-tail pocket.

Then he crossed the street and entered the passage Cendrier—a sinister little slit of unsavoury space between two high buildings—and so came to that terrifying maze of alleys, back-doubles and broken streets which they used to call Le Labyrinthe.

This, Ratapoil knew, was exactly what was expected of him. He thought: This fellow who is following me is either a policeman who wants me to lead him to a conspiracy; or a conspirator who wants to track me to the police. In either case, the facts are worth finding out. If the police are on our heels already, it's as well to be on guard. And if—which is most likely—Lemoine and Boutreux have set a spy on me to reassure themselves; why, then let us have some fun!

HE reasoned: He knows that I know he is after me. Obviously, therefore, whoever he is, he believes that since I have been ducking and doubling like a hare, I want to shake him off. He wants to know where I am going, and assumes that I do not want him to know. He doesn't want to confront me. Therefore he must stay behind me. . . . But it is I who shall be behind him!

Ratapoil plunged into the stinking shadows of Le Labyrinthe.

At the end of the passage Cendrier he stopped a passing beggar, just before the beggar accosted him, and said: "Listen. Quick. Catch hold of this: five francs. Someone's after me. Man in a dark cloak, hat pulled down. If he asks you if you saw me, *don't* say I went up the ruelle Vignon, d'you hear? Say I went down the allée des Aumonières. Is that clear?"

"God bless you," said the beggar; and Ratapoil knew that this beggar was saying: A swell crook. Must have got away with thousands; gives me a dirty hundred-sous piece. Hah!

He saw Ratapoil running into the ruelle Vignon; and Ratapoil, looking back, knew that he saw.

Exactly, he's watching me, that beggar, he said to himself. Watching where I go. He'll repeat every word I said to the first one that asks him and offers him a few coppers. But it would be exactly the same if I'd given him fifty napoleons . . . more so, in fact. Good.

Now, trying to put himself in the place of his pursuer, and having some experience, as an observer, of the strategy of the gutters, Ratapoil knew that the beggar would lay heavy emphasis upon "*don't* say I went up the ruelle Vignon."

The beggar would say something like: "And up he went, straight as a die. But if you want my advice, you cut down the Aumonières, go left into rue Desnolles through the allée Avry, and I bet you'll catch him nipping right back into the ruelle Vignon. He's one of those clever ones. I know that '*don't* say' sort. They mean '*do say*.' And these things go by opposites, so take it from me. . . ."

Then the unknown man in dark clothes would say: Obviously, this man Ratapoil knows that I am following him. Then why does he not, quite simply, confront me and say: "Sir, are you following me?" In that case, I should have no alternative but to say "no," and go off in another direction. But he is running away from me. All the more reason why I should run after him!

Reasoning thus, the man in the dark cloak would hurry after Ratapoil up the ruelle Vignon.

And so he did. Ratapoil heard his quick, quiet footsteps on the cobbles and stepped with the agility of a dancing-master into the shadow, audaciously close to a street-lamp—in the very penumbra that rimmed the murky light. The other man passed him so closely that his cloak brushed Ratapoil's hand. Hunted men do not slink into dark alleys to hide under lighted lamps. So the man in the cloak went on; and now Ratapoil was following him.

The lamps in Le Labyrinthe did not illuminate—they emphasized the surrounding darkness. There was dangerous walking here, for the cobblestones were uneven, and slippery with filth. There were graver dangers than broken ankles, also, in Le Labyrinthe, at that hour of the night, for a man indiscreet enough to walk there in a whole suit of clothes.

RATAPOIL could see that the man in the dark cloak was tired, and knew that he was sick at heart and homesick for the pavements and the lights of the big streets; and he smiled.

The ruelle Vignon ended in a blind alley. Ratapoil did not follow his man there, but waited until he stumbled out, and went after him into that fabulous tangle of passages known as Le Boyau —which means the guts—a nightmarish place in which one might wander for an hour, even in broad daylight, and always come back to one's starting point.

Here, the man in the dark cloak threw up the game and made his way wearily to a main street where (to Ratapoil's satisfaction) he leaned against a lamp-post and wiped his forehead. Ratapoil was only two yards away from him when he stopped a cab and said, in a weary voice: "Go to the cul-de-sac St. Pierre."

Ratapoil looked at the civilized street, and thought suddenly he would like to go home. Louise, his landlady's daughter was on his mind. Her curious behaviour intrigued him. But when a cab came, he said: "Cul-de-sac St. Pierre, old fellow." Looking at the bony old horse he added: "Which of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are you, old fellow? Famine, I think. Hurry, then, and I'll give you ten francs."

There was light behind only one of the windows in the cul-de-sac—the third-floor window of the last house. Let us try the first sign of life, said Ratapoil, and pulled the bell. Several minutes later an old man opened the judas-hole in the ancient door, and said: "What d'you want?"

"A word with my friend," said Ratapoil. "I mean the gentleman who came in a minute or two ago—the one in the cloak. Hurry."

"He's upstairs with Father Joseph——" the old man began.

"I know about all that," lied Ratapoil, impatiently.

The old man opened the door. "I disturbed your sleep. Here's ten francs for you," said Ratapoil. "Third floor, is it not?"

"Thank you, sir."

As he climbed the stairs Ratapoil remembered that even when he was a small boy, hide-and-seek was his

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THE HUMAN MACHINE

You Are Judge

THROUGH the ages wise men have laid emphasis on what they call "moral law." Countless books have been written on moral law. Systems of philosophy have been based on it. It lies deep at the foundations of religion.

Yet, in the end, moral law—that curious force that seems to be implanted in every human being—is an individual matter. Its effectiveness depends on you as a person answering the question, "Is it right?"—and having the pluck to order your own conduct accordingly.

The individual's fearless judgment of right and wrong is the only ultimate check on a reversion to barbarism.

None of us can escape the necessity of making that judgment. It is and always will be our own responsibility.

by ROFFE THOMPSON

He throws other people's parties

by NORMAN PHILLIPS

It's the season for celebrating. The débutante's father has handed over as host to the business man with something to sell. But it's still Mr. Kingston who fixes everything

IN A GAY New Year's Eve party at the Royal Albert Hall the guests will probably smash 1,200 glasses. Even if the after-the-ball-is-over score in broken glass reaches a new record, to Leonard James Kingston the loss is only an occupational hazard. He shrugs it off with as little concern as a housewife who drops a tumbler while washing up. Dark, mild-mannered Kingston, at forty-one, is in the business of throwing parties.

Leonard Kingston's sturdy build and medium height suggest the amateur footballer he used to be. His black-rimmed glasses and sober clothes betray his upbringing as a barrister at Oxford and Gray's Inn. There is little about this ex-Army officer to suggest that, as managing director of Mayfair Catering Company, he heads the largest firm of its kind devoted to staging social events of the most elegant order.

For these occasions Kingston will pay as much as £150 for one day's rent of a home — provided that it is in Grosvenor Square or has an equally imposing Mayfair address. There are still people who are willing to pay this for the privilege of receiving guests at a good—if borrowed—address.

Nor does Kingston bat an eye when asked for the loan of a few thousand knives and forks or if requested to serve dinner for two or two thousand.

The third generation of a family which has specialized in relieving hostesses of such problems as how to feed a multitude or where to find a spare butler, Leonard Kingston is master of as oddly assorted a collection of assets as is to be found in the business world. These range from a bevy of butlers to an assortment of silver which includes 12,000 knives of every description.

End of another good party. Kingston is congratulated by Sir Noel and Lady Curtis-Bennett and their daughter

The Harewood Wedding

For the wedding of the Earl and Countess of Harewood 4,802 pieces went to St. James's Palace. One item, much admired by the 1,000 guests, was a silver centre-piece made from a jardinière large enough to hold six bottles of champagne and the necessary ice. The jardinière, its royal tour over, is now back in Mayfair's North Row where it has rejoined the irreplaceable collection of fine silver, Irish damask and Copelands china.

Catering, the proper designation for Leonard Kingston's activities, does not always begin with spreading a fine table. Frequently he has to provide the table itself, the chairs and even the floor. On one occasion he had to build a ballroom on top of a pond.

"Lady Zia Wernher," Kingston recalls, "had us cover practically the entire garden of Somerlies House in Regent's Park. The ground had to be levelled and an underfloor laid over garden and pond before the oak parquet flooring could be put down. Few of the guests—and they included the King and Queen—knew they were dancing over water."

Portable Dance Floors

Three 3,200 square foot portable dance floors are part of Kingston's stock-in-trade. One of them is being installed in the £50,000 memorial to Edwardian elegance which he is furnishing in Mayfair. This place, in Bryanston Street, consists of banqueting and dancing rooms decorated with mirrors and gilt fixtures, to provide what Kingston considers the correct setting for receptions, balls and parties.

The Edwardian motif is Kingston's favourite because that era represents the heyday of the high society caterer. It is a period to which Leonard Kingston looks back with nostalgia, remembering his father's stories.

Only once did the Edwardian socialites disappoint the Kingston family. That was the evening when Leonard's father, Thomas, supplied a sumptuous supper for a titled woman.

The table was laid, the food piping

hot and the firm's staff of menservants stood by. No guests appeared.

"The hostess had forgotten to send out the invitations," Kingston says. "But my father was equal to the occasion. He went out into the highways and byways and invited anyone whom he met to come in."

Grosvenor, Berkeley and Belgrave Squares, in that order, offered the best addresses of that age. The balls and supper parties during the season kept Thomas Kingston up to five in the morning three and four nights a week. He was always back at his desk by 9 a.m.

"Today," his son declares, "the stately homes of England do not exist as homes. In my father's day it wasn't unusual for us to have three coming-out parties in one night in Belgrave Square."

Nowadays, débutantes, to the caterers' dismay, are lucky if they have one party under the joint sponsorship of several parents.

"Wouldn't have been considered a début in the old days," Kingston says.

Seaford House, Lord Howard de Walden's magnificent former residence in Belgrave Square, and one of the stateliest homes of London, has become the Imperial Defence College, but Kingston remembers its sweeping staircases as a prewar setting for brilliant parties and its grounds as the site of some of the firm's most ingenious construction work.

Build Dummy Rooms

"For a big party at Seaford House we would build a supper room at the side," Kingston says. "We try to build these temporary extensions to houses so skilfully that guests won't be able to tell when they are stepping out of the permanent building and into one of our portable rooms."

To achieve this requires a stock of panels, tapestries and a folding ceiling as well as portable flooring. Several weeks' work may go into the construction of a ballroom for one party.

The same flooring, panellings and ceilings have seen service in as widespread locations as Mayfair, Ascot and Yorkshire. Yet so cleverly is each job of redecoration done, no party guest has ever recognized the fact that he has often attended parties in different homes but in the *same* room.

New Year's Eve places the greatest strain on Mayfair's team of chefs, butlers and waiters. Before the war, on this night Kingston's resources were spread among one hunt ball in Yorkshire, two southern counties hunt balls and the Chelsea Arts Ball Supper in the Royal Albert Hall. The total number of celebrants to be cared for was more than 7,000.

The Albert Hall, at the time, had no kitchen equipment, a minor obstacle in the operations of Mayfair Catering. They set up eight completely equipped cooking centres for the night. The climax was the serving of a cake, four feet in diameter—big enough to give each of 5,500 guests a slice.

The Kingstons were almost stumped by another affair in the Albert Hall. The sponsors of a Christmas charity bazaar wanted to serve a mince pie, six feet in diameter.

To provide the pie was simple, the difficulty came in finding the tools with which to serve it. What the sponsors wanted was the one thing not in the firm's stores—a general's sword.

"We scurried around and got one," Leonard Kingston says. "We'll always hunt round to fulfil any request."

Food difficulties now prevent him from serving another speciality, a dish regularly served at the Nepalese Embassy before the war — banana and honey sandwiches.

Shark's fin soup, however, is still on the recipe books as well as a selection of national dishes which Kingston may be called on to provide for any of a score of London embassies. In contrast to the large balls where thousands are fed, embassy needs are often restricted to such intimate affairs as dinners for two statesmen or diplomats.

"They can take as much arranging as parties for hundreds of guests," Kingston declares.

Whether it be shark's fin soup or any more conventional potage, Kingston's guests may be sure of one thing. They will not be given round soup spoons. These may be all right for hotels and restaurants but Kingston does not recognize the existence of such implements. Nor did his father before him. They would just as soon ask a guest to eat peas with a knife.

"They are just an innovation," says Kingston, the social arbiter. "It is not correct to use them."

Rulings like these make Leonard Kingston's roster of manservants feel at home. Brought up in the rigid traditions of the butler's pantry, they cling to a way of life that is disappearing—the standards established by the gentry of Britain.

A random sample of a dozen of Kingston's staff reveals they have served such personages as Lord Cowdray, the Duke of Northumberland, Viscount Galway, Lady Denham, Lord Egerton, Lord Wimborne, the Marquis of Headfort, Viscountess Curzon, Lord FitzAlan, the Duke of Marlborough, the Hon. Alfred Rothschild, Lord Woolavington, Lord Brassey, the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, Lord Hollenden and Lord Londonderry.

Not only is it becoming more difficult to find waiters who have been trained in private homes, but there is also a dearth of people like Mrs. James Corrigan, the famous prewar London hostess, who could, and frequently did, spend £1,000 for a night's entertainment.

"Mrs. Corrigan would take a house in Mayfair," Kingston says, "and would think nothing of having 100 people for dinner. We undertook all equipment requirements for her at 16 Grosvenor Street, Kensington Palace Gardens, and at Dudley House, Park Lane. We looked after everything and even served the breakfasts she liked to give her guests after the dancing stopped."

The Chelsea Arts Ball. A dinner for two can be almost as much trouble

Same Houses, New Hosts

Today's trend in parties—it began in 1929, according to Kingston—still makes use of many of the same houses, the same elegant linen and silver and even the same menservants. The difference is that the host or hostess is more likely to be a fashion house or an advertising agency than a duchess, and the début is one for a new product rather than a young woman.

When the call does come for a reception in the traditional style, such as the wedding of the Hon. Patricia Mountbatten and Lord Brabourne at Broadlands, the country seat of the Mountbattens, Kingston is prepared. He has on file the record of a similar affair twenty-four years before, the wedding of Lord and Lady Mountbatten, Lady Brabourne's parents. The caterer on that occasion was Kingston's father.

With half the firm's clients now commercial houses, coming - of - age festivities take less prominence in Kingston's activities. For one of these parties—on the Duke of Roxburghe's twenty-first birthday—Kingston marshalled a staff of thirty-eight, packed his equipment in locked trucks and embarked for Floors Castle, Kelso, Scotland. The two-day celebration included pine-tree bonfires on the surrounding mountains.

It's All In The Files

Details of every function undertaken fill long, narrow ledgers in Kingston's old-fashioned office and provide the written record of the experience which is still called upon for such events as the Harewood-Stein wedding.

"Judged by the old standards, the 1,000 guests at St. James's Palace was not what we used to regard as a large wedding reception," Leonard Kingston says.

For a man who delights in big parties and a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Vintners, Kingston has simple tastes at home. After spending his days working out menus and decorations for the society world he goes home to serve his own guests what he calls "cheese and onions."

Pickles overcome, sitters-in convulsed. Nineteen-year-old twins, Mary and Margaret Leadbetter, are interviewed at youth hostel near Loch Lomond

MY LIFE (12)

Have a Go! makes the grade—and oh, the things they say at the mike! With a school atlas in front of us, Barney and I plan places we'll visit

by WILFRED PICKLES

I go all out for that homely touch

OUR SCHEME TO DOVETAIL *Have a Go!* into the tour of *The Cure for Love* worked out perfectly. Both were successful beyond expectation and although it was pleasing to know that our theatrical venture was so popular that the ten weeks had to be extended to ten months, the really big thrill for me was the way *Have a Go!* was enabling me to bring the people to the people.

I liked this job and I knew it was something for which I had been vaguely searching throughout my radio career. For Mabel, too, it was a realization of her confident prediction of so many years before that there was some programme that would be particularly fitted for me.

I was intensely proud of the success of the programme and I felt it was the instinctive simplicity and homeliness of the everyday men and women I interviewed that gave it strength and vitality and freshness.

There was none of the imaginative fictions of the script-writer just as there was none of the ordered tidiness that characterized so much that came out of B.B.C. studios.

I appreciated that it would mean nothing to listeners if a man told me at the microphone that his uncle was a prime minister. But if he said, "Well our cat had kittens in my bowler this morning!" millions would rock with laughter. It could have happened to *them* and many a man would no doubt slip out to see that his headgear was still safe on the hallstand.

I was learning, too, what great appeal there was in the ungrudging sincerity and the dignity, likeableness and unpretentiousness of the men and women who never made the headlines, or at least rarely enough for it to be a novelty. In their shyness also was great charm, and this quality, provided it was not extreme, was an asset at the microphone.

How fallacious the idea that the life-of-the-party character was what we wanted! It did not take me long to realize that the "personalities" who were so sure of their repertoire, or the oddities with an axe to grind, were the very people who drifted around the side entrances determined to catch the eye and edge their way into *Have a Go!*

They were the types we did not want. There were impressive exceptions, however, the most striking being grey-haired Ben Ainsworth, who insisted on taking part in the programme. It was clear he had the very qualities I liked and looked for.

It was in a small room behind the scenes in the spacious King George's Hall in Blackburn that I met this determined old man. Our volunteers from the audience were waiting to be conducted to the platform when in hustled Ben, a real Lancastrian, as forthright as he was upright.

"Sithee!" he called, coming straight at me. "Ah want to be in this 'ere quiz an' I want to answer questions on tunes. I only know eleven so I've written 'em down an' tha mon pick four out o' that lot!"

I chuckled as he handed me a page torn from a notebook. I knew Ben would be good at the microphone, so I wrote down the four tunes and arranged to have them played.

He told me he was seventy-three and when I asked if he was married, he spoke up confidently: "Ay, three times. She's t'latest down theer! Her wi' t'white 'at! And she's a good 'un!"

Three thousand voices roared. I asked: "What's

Mabel (left) at the gong. "There were so many complaints about it—one an anonymous phone call—that we decided it had better go on strike"

your favourite drink, Ben?" He grinned. His nose gave a little twitch and his eyes shone. "Tea wi' senna pods in!" he flashed. The biggest laugh ever heard in *Have a Go!* shook the hall.

And as Ben stepped lightly away, pocketing his winnings, he whispered: "I weren't kiddin'; I sup it every mornin'!"

What a grand personality, too, was the plump, jolly, red-faced Commander Harold Wilson, who sportingly insisted on coming into an all-Navy *Have a Go!* from Portsmouth. Before a tremendous audience of sailors and Wrens, Commander Wilson stepped up to the "mike" and I asked him: "Is there anything in life that you dislike?"

With a really nautical grin he leaned forward and said: "Just between you and me, Wilfred—bow-legged Wrens!"

It was simple. It was the sort of idea that might have occurred to the Admiral as well as Stoker Jones. There was no question of it being able to stand up as a gag: it was merely a very ordinary human sentiment. Yet even the battleships must have lurched under the force of the vocal explosion it caused.

Then there was the woman who answered my question: "What was the saddest moment in your life?" with, "The day I saw my boy in long trousers for the first time." Millions of mothers' hearts went out to her; so many had seen their sons grow into men. "Oh, yes!" they thought.

I felt humble yet enriched when I talked to a blind girl at Hull. She had been blind all her life and as I grasped her hand to guide her to her position near the microphone, I noticed she was wearing a wedding ring.

"I see you're married," I said. She smiled proudly. "Yes, I have a little girl two years old—and she has beautiful big blue eyes."

It was a most moving moment, a moment of humility for millions. I could not have spoken even if I had considered any words were needed. Eva's simple reply could never be capped.

So I said, "Let's have some tunes on 'smiling' because I'm sure, Eva, these should be your signature tunes." She joined in delightedly.

In Glasgow I interviewed a young medical student who towered above me as he stood by my side. After he told me he had served in the R.A.F. I asked him where he had been stationed and he casually mentioned a few aerodromes in England.

"Any decorations?" I inquired.

He paused. "The V.C." Deliberately he had mentioned the aerodromes in England in a casual way to put me off the track of his exploits in a bomber over Germany.

Violet Carson Joined Us

It was during one of our regular meetings that John Salt told me he had changed his mind about the band. "I agree with you," he said. "We need an instrument that can react immediately. Any suggestion as an alternative?"

I had nothing in mind but I told him I would think about it and when I got home that night I mentioned our problem to Mabel. Suddenly she declared enthusiastically that she knew the ideal person.

"Violet Carson at the piano," she said. Instantly I knew how right she was. I felt I had been rather slow not to think of Violet myself. So it was that Violet, a versatile artist and accomplished pianist with a flair for working in such a musically exacting medium as *Have a Go!*, came to join the team.

It was not long afterwards that Philip Robinson was put in charge of outside broadcasts for the North Region and Barney Colehan took his place. He had been helping Philip Robinson for some months in the *Have a Go!* back-room and he soon showed a reliable appreciation of the needs of the programme.

He was, I knew, the very man for us: happily married to a charming wife, understanding, kindly, and with a sharp sense of humour.

We Plotted Our Course

Barney and I gradually evolved methods of running the programme in such a way as to get the greatest variety of accents and experiences as well as places. With the tour of *The Cure for Love* at an end we were able to do all the Regions full justice and with a school atlas in front of us we planned our visits to the Midlands, the South Coast, Scotland, Ireland and Wales.

We must have looked like citizen soldiers scheming out an operation as we sat over a table in the front room of my home—the newly-named "Avago"—and stuck pins in the spots where we intended to call. In all of them we knew we had friends. Letters inviting us to nearly every inhabited area in these islands rolled into the B.B.C. until ten thousand were on the list.

Carefully we designed our series, balancing a little industrial town in Lancashire with the home of the Chelsea Pensioners, and a mining village in the South Yorkshire coalfield with a heavenly hamlet in the Cotswolds, until we had what we believed to be the ultimate in our variety of people and places.

Barney promptly contacted the people who had originally invited us and asked for further information about the district, pointing out that we would need a hall to hold no more than 500 folks. In many cases the individual arranged for ticket-distribution as well and after vainly trying to share out 500 passes among from 1,000 to 20,000 locals, became unpopular for his or her keenness and initiative.

To complete the show three or four guest artists took the stage ahead of me. We found that the best time to ask for volunteers was after the first act in the preliminary concert. Sometimes our request would be followed by a mad rush, but I have also seen an audience stay quite still.

Before every *Have a Go!* recording I have made a point of reassuring the volunteers that whatever happened at the microphone they would on no account be made to look foolish. But I made sure also that these advance meetings did not interfere with the spontaneity of the programme.

Imagine what would happen if some of the men and women heard on *Have a Go!* were to start rehearsing what to say? That heartiness, directness and blithe naïvety would be lost. I resolved from the early days of the programme that if there were a breakdown in recording I would re-record with a fresh set of people.

To hundreds of folk who have asked me why we bother to record at all I have always replied: "There is always the danger that a fanatic may slip into the show and say something offensive."

Again, volunteers have frequently become tongue-tied and I have had to coax them into conversation by a gradual and patient questioning about their jobs or something they knew backwards but which was not particularly interesting to the listeners, until they had enough confidence to talk naturally.

While there was public acclaim there were also complaints from hundreds of listeners who had become so sensitive about *Have a Go!* that they viewed with distaste the "gonging" of anybody at the "mike." I was buttonholed about it. Letters rolled in. People telephoned.

An anonymous gentleman summed it all up one evening when he telephoned my home and told me: "It's not like you, you know. When you gong anybody just because they can't answer a question you take away all the goodwill, all the homeliness and friendliness. . . ."

As I went back to the fireside to put my feet up, Mabel asked who it was. I told her I didn't know. "But he's got something. He's dead right. Who cares whether an old woman who has just told how she reared a family of twelve can answer a question about where the Alps are? It doesn't matter whether they're in France or Australia," I said.

"If you ask me," said Mabel, "we can leave all the clever answers to the Brains Trust."

We Got Some Beauties!

So the gong went on strike. Mabel hit it only to herald the start of each programme and the confidence in folks' minds that they would not be gonged made them less cautious in answering questions, with the result that we got some wonderful replies.

Once when I asked a man: "What is the renewal date for a dog licence?" he replied: "Seven-and-sixpence."

A newly joined sailor on board the battleship H.M.S. *Anson* confidently said that "splicing the mainbrace" was "getting married."

At Staveley, in Derbyshire, we took the recording gear down a pit, and at the coal-face, surrounded by dust-blackened faces, one miner said he had twenty-five children.

I asked him what his hobbies were.

"Well," he said quietly, "I haven't had much time for hobbies."

Down there in that men's world the remark produced a gust of laughter that must have been heard in the pit offices.

And then there was Molly Fitzgerald whom I met at a Roehampton hospital where men and women who had been badly hurt during the war were being treated. Some hobbled about with difficulty on crutches, while there were many—and Molly was among them—who lay in spinal carriages.

I decided to use a hand "mike" so that I could wander about. Molly looked beautiful; she had a sunny smile and her golden-brown hair fell about her shoulders. She told me she had been hit in the spine by a piece of shrapnel while serving on a gunsite at Ellesmere Port, and that she could not walk at all. I asked her what she liked doing best.

Her face was radiant as she said: "Playing poker with the lads when the matron isn't looking!"

Ambition—A Good Soaking

I found we had something—or more precisely, somebody—in common, when I asked who was her favourite personality and she told me it was Franklin Engelmann, my colleague of the news-reading days.

"What's your ambition for the future, Molly?" I requested.

"To go out into the rain," she said. "To get really wet through. The trouble is here that immediately it starts to rain they pull me inside—and I love to feel the rain on my face."

I asked what she disliked most, and Molly came back with: "Having to ask people to help me. If my bed is only two inches away, I have to say, 'Please will you help me into bed?'"

"How old are you, Molly?"

"Twenty-three," she said.

NEXT WEEK: I have a go at pantomime

ENGINE TROUBLE

by LAURENCE KIRK

Everyone heard the news in turn. Their faces did not alter. But their minds began strange, urgent journeys

A FIVE-DAY JOURNEY in a flying boat is not unlike a long weekend in a very expensive nursing home. The operation of transporting the patient nine thousand miles is guaranteed to be painless; and everything imaginable is done to nourish and entertain you so that you may be handed back to your relatives at the journey's end in the best possible state of repair.

There are two male nurses and one female, and the female—or stewardess—is invariably a very attractive young woman. It is she who shows you to your seat, which is upholstered in a delicate shade of mauve, and explains how the safety belt—in the same delicate shade of mauve—should be done up and released.

She also makes sure that you dispose of your belongings in a sensible fashion; informs you that the gents is for'ard and the ladies aft; intimates how sweets, cigarettes, aspirin and oxygen may be obtained; and adds casually that if you should feel unwell—which, of course, you won't—a neat little paper bag is provided in the right hand pocket of the mauve-upholstered seat, which can be adjusted in one movement to three different comfortable positions.

While this has been going on, you have probably been wondering—if you are a man—whether the young lady has any dates to spare; or—if you are a woman—whether she has her hair done in London or Johannesburg.

But then a moment later one of the male nurses is standing beside you, wearing a deflated Mae West. He explains that it is quite absurd that he should have to do this; but it is in the book of rules, and should an emergency occur you will find a similar contraption just behind your seat. You do it up with the three hooks: so: so: and so.

HAVING done it up, you inflate it by pulling this lever; but you must not do that until you are out of the aircraft because you will be too inflated to get through the aperture, and that will be very annoying for the people behind you. But having got out and having blown yourself up, everything is provided to keep you afloat and prevent you getting lost while the £250,000 aircraft goes to the bottom. A whistle to attract attention. A red electric light for the same purpose. And a packet of chocolate in a waterproof case to help pass the time.

The male nurse ends by advising you to ignore the invitation below the window to smash it with your foot or fist, as that might easily let the water in and make it more difficult to do the right things to the Mae West.

By this time if you are of a nervous disposition you may be in need of one of the aspirins which the stewardess talked about; but you probably console yourself by regarding the calmness of the water through the porthole and practising with your safety belt. But then you find a solid-looking man with three stripes on his khaki tunic standing beside you and smiling.

This is the captain of the aircraft—or matron. He does not have much to say except that the weather reports are good and that he will keep you informed of any places of interest as you go along. He then goes for'ard through the green door and presently one of the engines starts.

There is a diversion at this moment because one of the two pink-faced men on the port side of the cabin thinks he has lost his passport. The nurse—or stewardess—comes to the rescue and, having found his passport, keeps it in case he loses it again. And by this time you realize that all four engines are running and that the boat is moving.

As it moves the engines are tested in pairs, and a moment later your mauve-upholstered seat suddenly presses you in the back and a sheet of water is flying past the porthole. This sheet of water hides everything, the float, the wing, the engines; but soon it begins to move aft and the sixty-ton ship is skimming over the water and then—imperceptibly—airborne.

The blue carpet below sinks farther and farther away; and in another five minutes the yellow electric sign—"No Smoking"—goes out. Everyone undoes his safety belt and reaches for a cigarette.

THE appearance of the earth when viewed from ten thousand feet or more tends to become monotonous in a very short space of time—and that perhaps explains why Providence takes so little interest in what goes on here.

Richard Wessell for his part had grown tired of gazing at the distant featureless scrub below him even before he had finished his first cigarette, and he began to look around and study his fellow passengers. He was in the middle cabin on the lower deck. He knew that there were further cabins for'ard in the big hull, and still more aft on the upper deck; but there were only six seats within his view.

He himself was sitting by the window facing for'ard on the starboard side. The seat next to him was empty, but there was a grey-haired man opposite who was already doing a crossword, and an elderly lady who must have been very pretty at one time beside him. She had already taken an aspirin and had her eyes shut.

On the port side of the cabin across the gangway were the two pink-faced men. At least they had been. But the moment the warning sign had gone off they had both released their safety belts and gone briskly for'ard. Surely they can't be feeling ill already, Richard had thought. And

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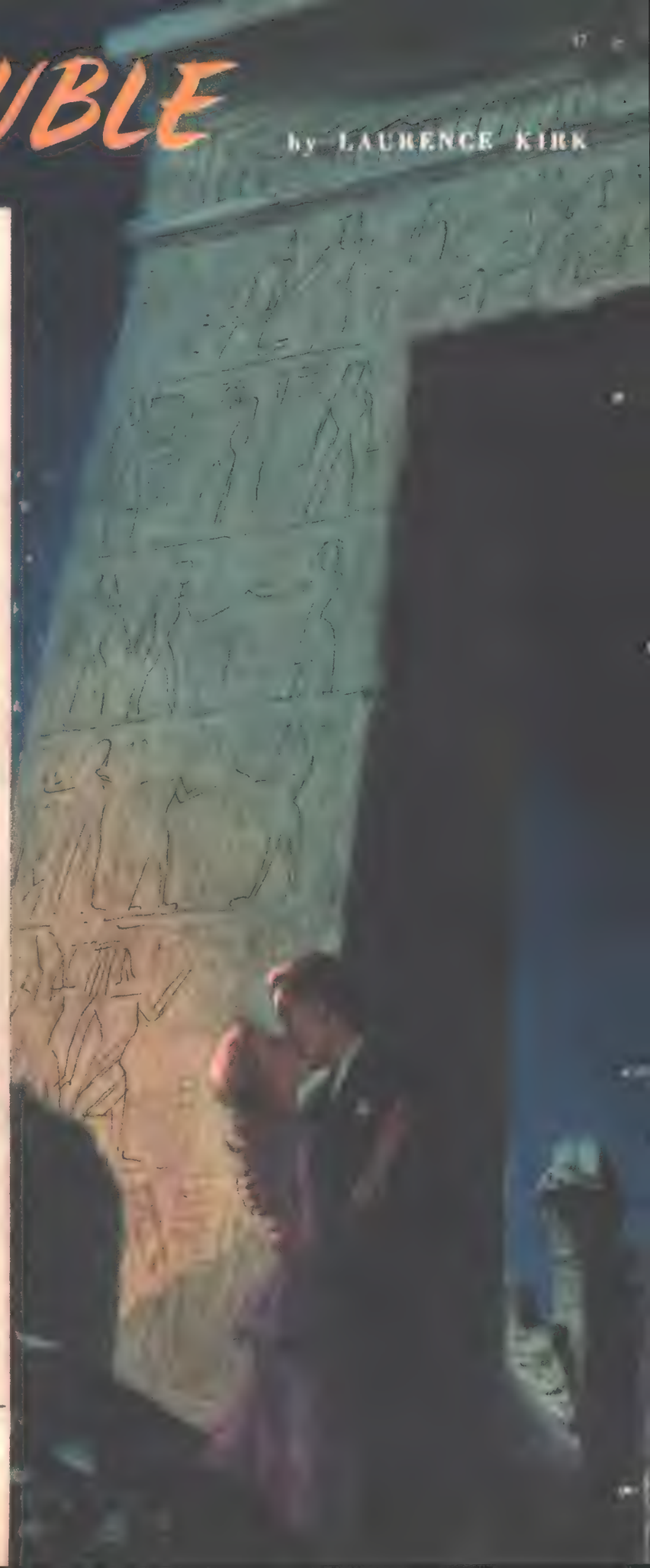
At Luxor, they saw the Temple by moonlight. Angela slipped, and Richard did more than support her

ILLUSTRATED BY E. EARNSHAW



besides, if they were, they were going in the wrong direction! But he need not have worried about them.

Immediately aft of that cabin there was a very well appointed bar with unlimited quantities of whisky, and that was where the two pink-faced men were now to be found. In fact, that was where they were to be found all the time except when the flying boat was taking off or landing.

Three days later the brown uninteresting scrub below had changed to a blue featureless carpet as the aircraft left the artificial lake at Alexandria behind and proceeded smoothly over the Mediterranean.

By that time Richard was in a bemused and bewildered state of mind. He did not seem to belong to himself any longer or to the wife and child who were waiting for him in England.

If he belonged to anyone it was either to the pretty stewardess—or nurse—who did everything except tuck him up in bed, or to the attractive young woman called Angela who was travelling alone and had a seat on the top deck beside the woman with the three pig-tailed girls who came from Durban.

RICHARD was a steady young man and could not understand how this had happened to him. He had been out in South Africa on a business trip and had not only concluded his business successfully but had avoided every kind of personal entanglement. In fact, during the whole two months of his tour he had been looking forward to one thing only, and that was to get back to Violet and Dumpy again. Now that that happy moment was only one night distant, why was it that he was thinking, not of Violet, but of Angela on the upper deck?

Richard on the whole was inclined to blame, not Angela, but the pretty stewardess for this strange state of affairs. She looked after them all with such competence and such charm; shepherded them, jollied them, comforted them, so that one was left with a feeling of complete personal irresponsibility.

And the ordinary human feeling of reserve had been broken down, too. At the end of the first day's flight everybody had known everybody else. The grey-haired man who did the crosswords was Mr. Samuel Walker, the director of a big company. The elderly lady, who must have been so pretty, was Mrs. Don and she was going home to meet her first grandson. The two pink-faces alone remained aloof from the rest; but they were known as Tweedledum and Tweedledee and were quiet, genial, and alcoholic. The woman from Durban was Mrs. Archer and the three children were going to school in England.

And Miss Corke, with the pretty chestnut hair, was already Angela.

If anything more was needed to break down the barriers that keep people apart, it was provided and amply provided by the places at which they stopped. The first night had been spent at Livingstone and they had arrived in time to see the Victoria Falls by daylight. There is no more impressive sight in the whole world and it was natural that it should increase their sensation of unreality.

It was natural, too, that Richard and Miss Corke should pair off, being of a suitable age: and equally natural that he should put out his hand to support her when she slipped.

And then after a stop in the rich tropical warmth of Kampala, a pause at Khartoum and thoughts of Gordon, the third night had been spent at Luxor, and they had been able to see the Temple of Karnak by moonlight. Here was a grandeur as impressive as the Falls: but very different. And the air was so soft and the moon so bright.

One couldn't help feeling romantic with all the glory of ancient Egypt around one; and so when Angela slipped for the second time—the paving was very uneven—Richard not only supported her with his arm, but held her, and kissed her as well. And she seemed to recognize the romantic nature of the situation as well as he did.

So now that was the position as the flying boat droned on over the blue Mediterranean. Richard was no longer thinking of his homecoming. He was wondering what was going to happen at Augusta in Sicily, which was their next stop.

There would be the same moon there, a little larger and later, no doubt; and perhaps there would be the ruins of a Roman temple to provide the right environment. Richard did not intend any harm; but after three sherries before lunch that day he was telling himself that one is only young once, and that meant that he had given up resisting.

As it happened, it was not at Augusta, but after Augusta, that the thing occurred.

The Sudanese are tiresome about passports and the Egyptians even more objectionable, so all this time the nurse—or stewardess—had kept charge of the whole lot of them. The Italians, on the other hand, did not take the smallest interest in passports; and after lunch she went round handing them back to their rightful owners. She even entrusted the pink-faced men with theirs and told them which pockets to put them into.

Richard did not pay much attention when his was placed on the table in front of him: he was looking out of the window at a ship far down below on the blue water. A moment later when he picked the passport up he noticed that it did not seem to be quite the usual shape. It was only then that he observed that it was an Eire passport and that it bore the name of Mrs. Angela Corke.

If the stewardess had not passed on up the little spiral stairway to the upper deck, he would no doubt have returned the passport to her immediately. As it was, however, the "Mrs." in front of the "Angela Corke" was rather a shock to him.

Angela had told him quite a lot about herself, her favourite colour, her favourite scent and her favourite film star. But she had never mentioned a husband, whether favourite or not.

So he now looked inside the book and discovered that she not only had a husband, but two children of the male sex, and moreover was thirty-two years of age which was older than he was himself and at least seven years more than he had guessed.

How very deceitful, Richard thought to himself! Really very deceitful!

THEN he remembered that though he had never pretended to Angela that he was single he had not actually volunteered the information that he was married either, and he wondered rather anxiously whether the stewardess would discover her mistake before she handed his passport to her. His passport not only gave away the fact that he was married, but had a photograph of Violet on it as well.

Richard was almost as pink in the face as Tweedledum when the nurse—or stewardess—came back five minutes later. She was most apologetic over the mistake. Very careless of her! Never been so stupid before! But here was his proper passport with the vaccination and yellow fever certificates carefully pinned inside.

Richard was reassured. She was a nice girl and she wouldn't do a thing like that on purpose.

He did not know, of course, that Angela had had just such a good look at his passport as he had had at hers.

After that episode the moonlight at Augusta was wasted. Richard went out for a long walk by himself to avoid seeing Angela, and she stayed in her room to avoid seeing him. During the night the weather began to change and a stiff breeze got up from the south-west. It was still sunny in the morning, though there were dark clouds on the horizon; and the flying boat bounced a bit on the choppy bay as they took off.

But they were off almost as quickly as usual and soon the vast snow-covered cone of Etna appeared level with them on the starboard side.

Safety belts were undone with even more than the usual sensation of relief. Southampton next stop! It had been a lovely trip, but thank goodness it was nearly over!

The first Richard knew that anything was wrong was when, with Etna still looming beside him, pink-faced Tweedledum and the now petunia-faced Tweedledee were shepherded back to their seats from the bar and firmly strapped in by one of the male nurses. Normally that would not have happened until they were landing at Southampton.

It was then that he happened to look through the porthole and saw that the inner starboard engine had stopped. Then a little later the assistant pilot appeared in the doorway and leaned against one of the seats.

"Afraid we've got to go back to Augusta," he announced casually. "Little spot of engine trouble."

The grey-haired man looked seriously put out. "Back!" he exclaimed. "But we've only just started! I thought you could run on three engines."

The assistant pilot tried not to look weary.

"We can run on two," he answered. "But on the whole we prefer not to. Not over the Alps at any rate." He was just shutting the door behind him on his way to the upper deck when he dropped out a further piece of information. "Afraid we'll have to cruise round a bit for a while. Got rather a heavy weight of petrol on board."

Everyone was given this unwelcome news in turn, and everyone remained perfectly calm on hearing it. But though their faces did not change, their thoughts suddenly began to move in channels to which they were unaccustomed. Suspense took the place of time, and there was at once far too much of one and far too little of the other.

They thought of things that they might have done long ago and must do at once if ever they reached Southampton. The flying boat meanwhile had come down to a thousand feet and was flying round and around the city of Syracuse. The captain thoughtfully was keeping away from the sea so that his passengers would not notice how choppy it was getting. But there were disadvantages in the scenery about Syracuse, too.

Not only was there an ancient Greek amphitheatre with its empty rows of stone seats, but there was also a very ornate Italian cemetery full of angels and urns and cypress. No one could help noticing that cemetery as they flew round it and around.

IN these circumstances everyone reacted differently.

Mrs. Archer was looking out through the porthole at the black cloud to the south-west. She looked quite serene, but she was praying as hard as she knew how. It doesn't matter about me, she was saying. I've had my life, and I'm grateful for it. But please, God, don't let anything happen to the children! It isn't fair that the young should die.

Angela across the gangway was different again. She couldn't love; and she wouldn't work; and she couldn't pray. Why do I always pick on the wrong man, she thought? How boring my husband is! How unattractive my children! Why did that nice-looking man need to be married? What's the good of a married

Continued on page 20

NOW YOU KNOW

HOW FAR AWAY should you sit when televiewing? Makers recommend viewers to measure the diagonal of the screen and then sit about six times that distance from the set.

For comfort don't completely black-out the room—it's more restful on the eyes to have a light on.

Resist knob-twiddling. Once the controls have been properly adjusted they should not need much further attention.

If reception is reasonably strong, more than one "lead in" can be taken from the same aerial if you want to move your set to other rooms, but arrange for this when it is installed, as it's a job for an expert.

A licence for television and radio costs £2, and there's a rebate on the unexpired portion of the ordinary radio licence when you make the change.

Television is not heavy on electricity—about the same as two light bulbs.

OH, JOHNNY! by TIM

Clown who has the last laugh

When he's in the ring it's always the other fellow who gets the custard pie. Circus law says that *his* jokes must never back-fire. He's the White Clown • **by CHARLES WAUGH**

PERCY HUXTER, A SHORT, slender man with iron-grey hair and warm, brown eyes, who loves his family and is kind to animals, is currently stuffing small dogs into sausage machines and pouring buckets of water over his best friends. He draws a handsome salary for this anti-social behaviour.

Huxter is Bertram Mills's "White Face Clown," a rank well up in the circus hierarchy. He is the man who traditionally devises hoaxes and shenanigans but who must never be the victim of a practical joke.

The White Clown always wins.

As the White Clown at Olympia, Huxter is distinguished from twenty other buffoons in the same circus by his £250 costumes (he changes them as often as ten times during a performance) and by his severe white make-up which, in the past thirty years, has varied only by the addition of three twinkling spangles. When he is in the ring there are usually spangles at the base of each archly pencilled eyebrow and one glitters on the tip of his slightly tilted nose.

The Unwritten Code

This make-up is Huxter's trade mark and, according to the unwritten, but rigidly enforced code of the circus, no one else may copy it. Recently a friend showed him a photograph of another man made up in Huxter's style. Huxter was just as shocked as a Bank of England official who has been presented with a very good, but nonetheless forged five pound note.

The indignation was shared by Coco, Huxter's colleague and the victim of most of his gags. Coco, a former Latvian whose name is Nicolai Poliakov, is the "auguste," the clown with the heavy make-up, bulbous nose and grotesque costume, who is on the receiving end of the custard pies and the buckets of water.

In Huxter's favourite routine—known to the profession as the water entrée—Coco is dowsed with twenty-five gallons of water, twice daily. The two remain fast friends off stage.

"I've only had one cold in my life," the sodden Coco declares. "I still have it."

Starts As A Bet

The water entrée is built around a bet between Huxter and Coco that the latter can't carry a bucket of water up and down a ladder without spilling it. A more complicated method Huxter uses to drench his partner is the radio entrée, where Coco is subjected to a downpour from a loudspeaker which alternately yields music and water.

The radio used in this act is operated by a couple of electricians who make the receiver produce music while Huxter is at the controls. When Coco tries to manipulate the machine he gets a shower bath.

Huxter's props are all his own property and mostly of his own making. While resting between the end of the tenting season and the opening at Olympia, he invented a spring-loaded dachshund to improve the hoary sausage-machine gag.

This prank calls for a dog to be inserted at one end of a piece of machinery ostensibly to be turned into a string of sausages which emerges at the other end. The new Huxter dog is equipped with a spring which enables it to be condensed into a small space and also gives the stuffed animal the appearance of resisting its fate when Huxter shoves it in the machine.

Sews His Own

The needlework on the dog, like the stitches on his stuffed snake, are the clown's own handiwork. The ability to sew is useful when it comes to wearing, as Huxter sometimes does, a £250 velvet costume covered with at least 220,000 sequins. These adornments come off in the stress of a clown's cavorting and he spends considerable time sewing them back on.

Huxter has costumes with as many as a million spangles on them, several speckled with diamanté and one ornamented with birds of paradise. He designs these himself, selects rich fabrics which cost as much as 63s. a yard and has them made up by his own costumier.

Huxter, who is five feet five and a half inches tall and weighs ten stone four, needs seven yards of material for each costume. He usually tops them off with a deep ruffle in white, edged with the predominating colour of his ensemble. Off-stage he wears flannels and a tweed jacket.

Over Fifty Costumes

"I always seem to be getting new costumes," Huxter says. "I keep about fifty or sixty of them in my wardrobe."

The make-up which covers Huxter's tanned face is also home-made. He uses so much white base on his features that he has found it more economical and, he thinks, more effective, to manufacture his own beauty preparation.

The white background is a compound of zinc oxide and fats which he mixes according to his personal and secret formula. A white powder sets the grease and he then applies the red and black lines which give him his unique appearance. The process takes about twenty minutes.

Getting it all off takes longer and Huxter doesn't feel really clean until

Percy Huxter: his make-up, unchanged for thirty years, is his trade mark

he shaves again. "It's a mucky job getting rid of all the paint," he declares.

The fact that he has been appearing in the same make-up for thirty years is one of the few clues Huxter lets drop as to his age and experience. A confirmed subscriber to the circus maxim that old clowns never die, Huxter is coy about his years and will only admit that he has been appearing professionally since he was eight years old.

Huxter first saw the light of day in Bath, a circumstance controlled by the fact that his father, "Little Teddy," a top rank clown and rider, was billed to appear there. "Mother was sent on ahead of the circus when my arrival became imminent," Huxter explains. "I don't remember whether I got to Bath before the circus or not."

When the circus moved on, Percy and his two elder brothers went with it. For the next seven years, father was on the Continent, so the boys learned German and French.

They got their schooling from a tutor when they were not learning such circus arts as tumbling and acrobatics. Father, who had apprenticed himself to a circus at the age of eight, believed in starting his children young.

He Went To The Top

As the youngest and smallest of the family, Percy became the "top mounter," the one who had to climb on top of his other brothers in the climax of their act, a stunt called "Three High." The routine called for one brother to stand on the other's shoulders and then for Percy to perch on top.

At a signal from the boy at the bottom the three would slowly lean forward like an overbalanced Tower of Pisa and finish off with a series of jumps and rolls.

Huxter looks back on his career as one illustrating the theory that clowns are not born but made. Very few of the great comics have started off by trying to make people laugh. More often they have been acrobats like Huxter or riders like his father. Even Peter Morrissey, a neophyte clown, whom Huxter has been grooming for the Mills's circus, got his break through being adept at tumbling.

Morrissey, a "stocky little chap," according to Huxter, is a Liverpool lad who, at fifteen, has completed his schooling and is joining the circus. He had a five-week trial period during the summer, when he was placed in Huxter's charge.

The young clown's schooling includes deportment, carrying a gag, pantomiming, facial expression and make-up.

Huxter also coaches him at tumbling and imparts to him such items of circus lore as the legend that it is bad luck if anyone puts up an umbrella in the tent or starts knitting.

These two superstitions seem reasonable to Huxter, because they show that whoever has the umbrella or the knitting needles is more interested in them than in the performance. He does not respect the unwritten ban which condemns green as a colour for a costume. He rather likes the colour.

Huxter slips down to his comfortable home in Worcester whenever the circus is within distance. He spends November there after the tenting season ends and before the Olympia show opens. After seven weeks in London he is back for another holiday before starting out on the road in the middle of March. The tenting season, which took him to twenty-six towns last year, follows one of three circuits, the Scottish, Midlands or Southern.

"There is always a three-year interval before we go back to a town," he says. "That means that every three years I must have a new stock of gags."

Gags come to Huxter when he's in a café, riding in a bus or pottering about his Worcester garden. If inspiration finds him at home, he tries out his ideas on his wife and two daughters. "They really think I'm funny," Huxter says in some surprise at the phenomenon of a clown being amusing in his own home.

Huxter's longest rest in Worcester began in June, 1940, and ended six years later. He spent the war years as a civil servant, working sometimes as long as fourteen or fifteen hours a day. But he kept in trim by entertaining the children at the Royal Albert Orphanage in Worcester. "I fell flat on my back the first time I turned a butterfly there," he says, "but I soon recovered my form." (The "butterfly"—a sort of cartwheel without using the hands—is one of the trickiest acrobatic stunts.)

Huxter was in fine form when a telegram arrived asking if he would like to join the postwar circus. Although he no longer lives in a caravan, he likes the life on the road and knows that, according to tradition, while visiting a friend's caravan he must never cut a loaf of bread with the open end of the loaf facing the window.

An Offer From Moscow

Circus and variety engagements have taken Huxter through North and South America, North and South Africa and most of Europe. One country he has never played is Russia. Before the war Moscow recognized Huxter's international reputation by making him an offer to play a long run at the State circus in the Soviet capital.

"It was one of the best offers I have ever had," he says, "and it was payable in dollars or sterling. They guaranteed me a certain number of square feet living space, but said I'd have to bring my own blankets and do my own cooking.

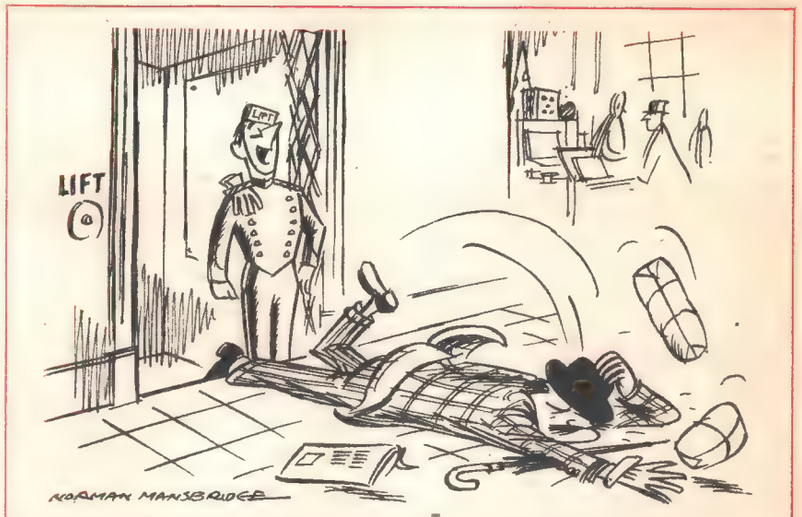
"Just fancy me doing my own cooking," Huxter exclaims. "The White Clown is supposed to make the traps for others to fall into. If I had to cook, I'd be playing pranks on myself."

The last he heard about the Moscow brand of humour was a gag where a moth-eaten looking lion is brought into the ring.

The clown tells the Muscovites not to fear the British lion and proceeds to twist its tail. The twist removes the lion's costume and reveals a small donkey.

"If I'd gone to Moscow," says Huxter, "they would probably have used me instead of the donkey."

And that wouldn't do at all, for, as Huxter emphasizes, the White Clown always wins.



"Fifth floor—conjuring, novelties, practical jokes . . ."

ENGINE TROUBLE

Continued from page 18

man to me? How do I know that his wife would divorce him? Oh dear, what a mess it all is! How I hate life! . . . And how afraid I am to die!

Below on the lower deck similar thoughts were going on. The pink-faced Tweedledum looked miserably out of the window. If that bar doesn't open soon, he thought, I shall go crazy. Why the devil have they got to shut the bar when things go wrong? Isn't that just the time when it ought to be open? Why can't the pilot fly straight instead of tilting everything up and making me giddy? Never needed a drink so much in all my life!

Opposite, the petunia-faced Tweedledee took a more serious view as he looked across at his boon companion. Old George drinks too much, he thought. No stamina! He'll crack up soon. Of course, I drink a bit myself. (He had done tot for tot with George since the plane started.) But that's different. It didn't happen until my wife died. . . . Wonder if she's waiting for me somewhere! Wonder if this is the end! Oh God, what a good thing if it were!

Across the gangway, Mr. Samuel Walker, the director of companies, was still doing crosswords, but he was thinking of other matters. If I'm killed now, he thought, the whole damned thing will come out. Ought never to have taken such a chance. Nobody can handle it except me. Wish my secretary were here!

Beside him, Mrs. Don had her eyes shut as usual. She was not going home, as she had stated, to see any grandchild, but to have a very serious operation which she could not afford. If only it could happen now, she thought, what a lot of money it would save! I'd be able to leave something for my darling Patricia. So simple! So quick!

But then she realized that if she were to be killed, all the other people in the plane would be killed, too. And so she began to pray, just as fervently as Mrs. Archer on the upper deck, that they might be spared.

Finally there was Richard himself. His first thought was one that pleased him considerably. Clever of me to take out that whopping life insurance! Violet and Dumpy would be all right now on that.

His second thought shocked him as profoundly as the first had pleased him. Why didn't I take Angela while I could? Wouldn't make any difference now!

He speculated then on what the ledger in heaven would mark for him. Would it be heavily in the red? The Italian cemetery with its urns and angels and cypress forced itself on his attention for the tenth time. . . .

Meanwhile the captain sat grimly at the controls.

All the responsibility was his. If he landed now with that heavy load he was taking a risk. If he waited and the weather deteriorated he was taking a greater risk. Not for the first time in his life he cursed the inadequacy of the MET reports. The final decision was always his and it was always guesswork.

Without looking he knew that the assistant pilot was beside him.

"Well, how are they all?" he asked.

"Bit green some of them," he was informed. "But not too bad really."

"Well, let's try and cheer them up. Take this down. Captain, to passengers. It may interest you to know that we have now used up enough petrol to provide each of you with a basic ration for eleven years. Stop. . . . Got that?"

"Got it." The assistant pilot grinned.

"Then take that round while I try to bring this damned kite down."

The news about the petrol was received with somewhat wan amusement by the passengers. What interested them much more was the sudden straightening of the aircraft as it headed into the wind, down towards the choppy sea. In an instant excitement took the place of fear. This was It: and It was thrilling. They were coming in at a pace far greater than usual; and the lower they got the solider the waves appeared. Now they seemed to be hurdling the biggest of them.

Hurdling! At a hundred and fifty miles an hour! They could. They couldn't. They could.

They had touched—and bumped up. Touched again more skilfully. Another wave! Up! Then they were down in the trough: thudding, bumping; and the clouds of spray were as if they were submerged altogether. But soon the spray cleared away and they were taxiing and tossing on the rough water. They were down! They were safe! All the old humdrum problems of their lives, which had been suspended for what seemed so long, were now back with them again.

"Beautiful landing, sir!" called Tweedledee when they had come to rest and the captain passed his seat. "Really magnificent!"

This time the captain did not pause. He did not want anyone to see how he was sweating. "I'll say it was!" he murmured under his breath.

THE STATE OF THE NAVY

Concluding an important John Bull Survey

by IAN BEVAN

President Peron followed by Admiral Tennant, inspects Marines aboard H.M.S. *Glasgow*. Argentina courtesy calls didn't get us more beef—but were useful

What showing the flag really means

An out-of-date idea? A futile strong-arm display? It's easy to belittle our "grey ambassadors." Here are the facts about their peacetime rôle

ON THE MANTELPIECE in the library of a charming old Worcestershire home sits a stuffed red and black bird which is, in its way, as fine a tribute to an ambassador of Britain as any bronze or marble statue. The bird is a Cock of the Rock, a rare specimen found only in some of the more inaccessible parts of the South American interior, and it belongs to a Naval officer named William George Tennant, who was one of the last two men to leave Dunkirk, but who would prefer to be described as president of the Royal Naval Bird Watching Society.

His career began when he went to a training ship in 1905 at the age of fifteen, and by 1945 he had risen to be a vice-admiral. During all those years, almost the only interest he allowed himself apart from His Majesty's Navy was bird-watching.

In October, 1946, he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the American and West Indies Squadron based on Bermuda, and he went there with the twin reputation of being an outstanding officer and a keen ornithologist.

He came home a few months ago confirmed as both, but with a third and perhaps more important mark of distinction. In two and a half years cruising the Atlantic and Pacific, he had become an accomplished diplomat.

As Naval C.-in-C. at Bermuda, he was one of eleven men directly responsible to the Board of Admiralty for the day-to-day operations of the sea-going Navy. (The others are the C.s-in-C. of the Home Fleet based at Portland, the Mediterranean Fleet at Malta, the Far East Fleet at Singapore, the East Indies Squadron at Trincomalee in Ceylon, the South Atlantic Squadron at Simonstown in South Africa, the Flag Officer Submarines at Gosport, and the four C.s-in-C. at Portsmouth, Plymouth, Chatham and Rosyth.)

The post was an important one, but in terms of men and ships under his command it barely merited such a high rank as he held. Vice-Admiral Tennant knew, however, that his main job was not to command a Naval squadron but to act as an ambassador-at-large to the twenty-four countries of the two American continents.

Ships of the Royal Navy have a very special and important job to do in peacetime which has earned them the name of our "grey ambassadors." They visit virtually every nation in the world with an ocean coastline (including—several times since the war—the Soviet) on goodwill trips usually described as "showing the flag."

Goodwill contacts with the Russians provide their own special problems, as one young lieutenant found when ships of the Mediterranean Fleet visited the Black Sea port of Sebastopol.

Obliged on one occasion to find something to talk about with a gruff and forbidding senior Russian naval officer in the few words of French which were their only common language, the lieutenant cast around desperately for a safe non-political subject and at last, from his schoolday memories, drew the name of the poet Pushkin.

Sting In The Tail

The Russian's face lit up. "You like Pushkin," he said, "then you must hear me read." The lieutenant was taken into another room and for two hours had to listen to Pushkin read in Russian.

"There," said the Russian, when at last he closed the book, "now I am sure you will never again believe all the monarcho-fascist lies about our country."

The important oil-producing countries of the Persian Gulf have been on the Navy's regular visiting list for more than 180 years, and recently one of the sloops offered a lift to a desert Sheikh who was paying a ceremonial visit to another Sheikh farther down the gulf. He turned up with several tons of baggage including a small herd of sheep

Men of the cruiser *Superb* take children on board for a party. Pirate clothes are an important part of the Navy's ambassadorial wardrobe

which would supply him with fresh meat.

Running, sweating, cursing, a party of ratings tried to drive the sheep from the shore, down a plank on to a barge. Arabs sat in the shade enjoying the show. When he thought the comedy had gone far enough, an old man picked himself up, went across and grabbed one of the sheep which he carried down into the barge. The others followed meekly behind. Even the Royal Navy must learn a lesson sometimes.

South After Christmas

The regular peacetime cruising schedule of the Home Fleet is well known. After Christmas leave at home, the fleet sails southwards for joint exercises in the Atlantic with the Mediterranean Fleet.

Then there are courtesy visits to Gibraltar and North Africa. The fleet returns to the U.K. about Easter with a heavy cargo of souvenirs from such romantic places as Tangier and Casablanca. After the Portland Regatta in May, the ships go off in ones and twos to visit the countries of northern Europe and also the coastal towns of the British Isles.

They meet again at Torquay for the regatta, then to Invergordon for gunnery and torpedo practice, down to Rosyth for visits to Edinburgh, and back to home ports in time for Christmas leave.

It is a well-worn schedule and all the countries visited are old allies of Britain, so that there is no obvious return in the shape of new friends made.

The squadron at Bermuda has so many countries to visit that it is impossible to fit them all into an annual schedule, and even such an important country as the Argentine was visited only twice during Admiral Tennant's tour of duty.

The first thing the admiral did when he arrived at Bermuda was to start learning Spanish, the most common though by no means the universal language of South America. A diplomat need not be fluent in the language of every country he visits, but if he can make an effort at conversation in his host's language the compliment is always appreciated.

The Naval C.-in-C. at Bermuda has a domain which extends from the North Pole to the South Pole, and from the Azores to Pearl Harbour. Early in 1947, Admiral Tennant set about visiting every important port in this huge area, and before he returned to England in mid-1949, he had sailed 60,000 miles, taken his flagship into some forty ports, played host at more than 500 luncheons, cocktail parties, dinners, receptions, dances and children's parties, and shaken the hands of about 10,000 people, ranging from presidents to deep-sea whalers.

In Los Angeles he gave a dinner party for members of Hollywood's British colony, when the guest list included Gladys Cooper, Madeleine Carroll and Alan Mowbray, together with America's most ardent Anglophile, Douglas Fairbanks, jr.

In Puerto Montt, in Chile, he gave afternoon tea to an eighty-six year old English-born farmer who had trekked forty miles on foot to come aboard a British ship, the first time he had been even technically on British soil for fifty years. The admiral gave him a matchbox and an ashtray with the ship's coat of arms to take back to his ninety-year-old wife, who had had to stay on the farm in the hills.

He visited a whaling factory in South Georgia, a film studio in Hollywood, and a coffee plantation in Brazil. He called on the President of the United States in Washington, attended the inauguration of the President of Uruguay in Montevideo, and twice played host on board his flagship to the President of the Argentine.

Four or five months before he set off on a "show the flag" cruise, his plans were submitted to the Admiralty, who showed them to the Foreign Office and, when necessary, to the Colonial Office and the Commonwealth Relations Office. They checked them for possible international repercussions.

British representatives in the countries to be visited were then warned that the admiral would be coming, and asked to draw up lists of guests who should be invited on board to parties, make arrangements for the exchange of official calls, and advise the admiral on what private invitations he should and should not accept.

The programme for each visit varied according to the size of the port, and took between six and nine days.

Salute For The Perons

First there were official calls. Presidents of States were received on board with full naval honours. President Peron and his wife Eva were given twenty-one gun salutes when they visited H.M.S. *Sheffield* in March, 1947, and H.M.S. *Glasgow* in March of this year.

The admiral held bilingual Press conferences in every port; then there were lunch and dinner parties on board for important guests, a party for children of the local British community, and parties on shore (generally arranged by British residents) for the officers and both watches of the crews.

The ships were open to visitors on at least one day, and the climax of each visit was a late afternoon reception on the flagship for up to 700 guests. On the last day of the visit there was a final exchange of courtesy calls between the admiral and heads of state. Then the squadron sailed to the next port.

Children's parties, which are a recognized R.N. speciality, are not dealt with in any Naval textbook, nor is the technique of giving them taught to students at Dartmouth College, but there is not an officer or rating who has been to sea and not learned the drill. Many an officer, in fact, would as soon think of sailing without his number seven mess uniform as he would without the pirate clothes in which he has welcomed countless children to afternoons of lemonade and cakes and slippery dips.

Admiral And The Children

You might expect a man who, during the war, directed Operation Mulberry (the artificial harbour which made the Normandy invasion possible) to be rather aloof from such minor Naval activities as children's parties, but not so Admiral Tennant. "My own first memory of a warship," he recalled the other day, "was going on board to a children's party, and that's a good memory for British children to have all over the world."

Adults, too, were left with their memories. At evening parties on board, the full ceremony of beating retreat was carried out. The ship's band played "Abide With Me," and the national anthems of Great Britain and the host country. "Many times," Admiral Tennant said, "I have seen guests standing on the quarterdeck who were so moved by the ceremony that tears were streaming down their cheeks."

When the *Vanguard* returned to Devonport from her Mediterranean cruise this year, she had steamed 14,350 miles in six months and visitors entertained on board had included the King and Queen of Greece, the President of the Lebanon, the Emir of Cyrenaica, and Field Marshal Smuts.

Just what does all this achieve? We have our regular Foreign Service, in itself a fairly expensive proposition, so it might well be asked why the Navy should have to undertake a duplicate task in diplomacy. It costs money to send grey ambassadors cruising around the world. What are the dividends?

Firstly, the Navy is quick to point out that the ships would have to be cruising somewhere anyhow. The only way to make sailors out of men is to take them to sea. "Show the flag" cruises are always training cruises as well. In addition to normal training, they can be made the occasion for tactical exercises with friendly navies, and several times during Admiral Tennant's cruises his squadron co-operated on mutually valuable exercises with the United States Navy and the Royal Canadian Navy.

Secondly, showing the flag can unexpectedly turn into a much more serious job than giving cocktail parties and shaking hands with distinguished guests. Twice during Admiral Tennant's command, the American and West Indies Squadron was ordered on urgent missions; once when British rights in the Falkland Islands were challenged by the Argentine and Chile, once when our rule in British Honduras was threatened by Guatemala.

Visits Are Worth While

Then, too, there is ample evidence in the files of the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade that R.N. visits have produced surprising results in terms of diplomatic and commercial goodwill. Certainly a couple of drinks on the quarterdeck for President Peron did not get us the supplies of Argentine beef we wanted, nor did the admiral's visit to Washington solve the dollar crisis; but in a great many less tangible ways Naval visits have shown themselves worth while.

Which brings the story back to the Cock of the Rock sitting on the admiral's mantelpiece. Wherever he went in the Americas, he was sent away with gifts and souvenirs.

Generally, as a tribute to his hobby, he was given a stuffed bird typical of the country he had visited. By the end of two and a half years, these had grown to be an imposing collection and the admiral had to leave most of them behind in the museum at Bermuda.

But he brought one of the smallest and rarest back with him. It had been given to him by the American Ambassador in Lima—another keen ornithologist—who had caught it on a trip into Bolivia. Collectors do not give their rarest specimens to rivals unless they wish to pay a great compliment.

To those who doubt the value of the Navy's "show the flag" cruises, that little red and black bird provides an answer. There could be few higher tributes to the esteem in which Britain's grey ambassadors are held abroad, unless it is the remark which Mr. Forrestal, then U.S. Secretary of the Navy, made to Admiral Tennant in Washington. "What a pity," he said, "that you can't steam your ships up to the Middle West."

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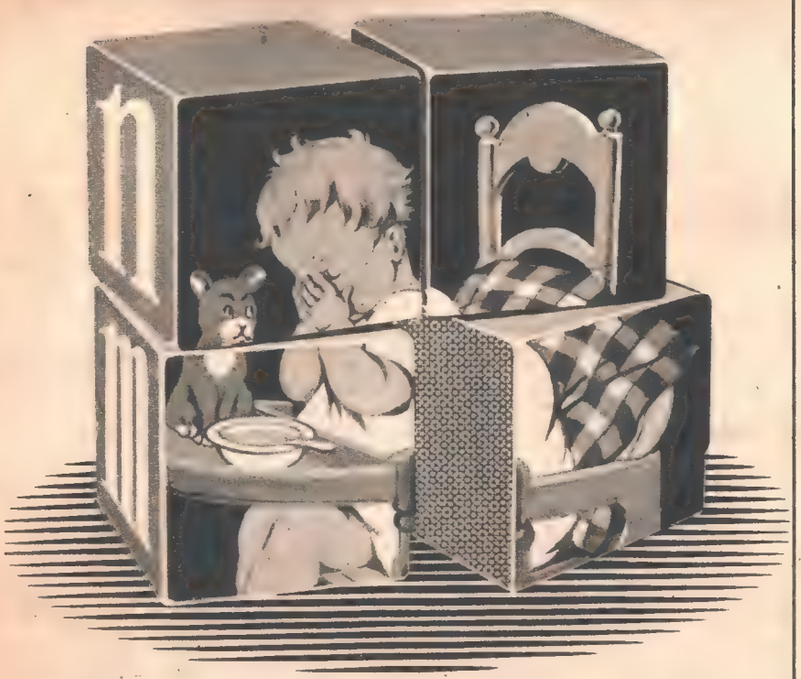

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PEPSODENT TOOTHPASTE fights FILM

because Pepsodent contains Irium

PD 146-1037-65

JACK OF SWORDS

Continued from page 12

favourite game; he had given it up at the age of ten, because he always won.

At the door of the third-floor apartment he stopped, adjusted the cup of his ear to the panel, and listened intently, stopping the other ear with a fingertip.

A familiar voice was saying: ". . . time wasted, then, eh?"

Another voice, cool and clear, said: "Yes, Monsieur Boutreux. Time wasted. Following that man was like shadowing a shadow. It was like trying to follow a black cat in the dark."

Then Ratapoil knocked at the door and, when it opened, stepped into the apartment and cried: "Miaaaouw!"—in excellent imitation of an amorous tom-cat—adding: "How about a saucer of milk?"

But his eyes were busy. He saw that he was in a little room separable from a larger room by green-painted folding doors which, at present, were wide open so that he could see M. Lemoine, standing by a great pile of papers that lay on a heavy old writing-table, clutching a document in one hand and a cocked pistol in the other. Cazac was there, leaning forward, half out of his chair, with a hand in a side-pocket.

The man who had opened the door was dressed in the habit of a priest; he was a little fat, dark-complexioned man with big, moist, anxious eyes; he had the pathetically hopeful expression of a spaniel when it watches you putting on your hat and coat. His startled hands, drooping at the wrists, looked like paws limp in supplication.

The man in the dark cloak had a pistol half way out of a breast pocket.

Ratapoil spoke to him with easy familiarity: "My dear fellow, when you walked past me in the ruelle Vignon just now—I was standing right under the lamp, by the way—I noticed that your shoes squeak. Mark my words, young man: it is injudicious to shadow a man if you are wearing squeaky shoes . . . varnished shoes, at that, God bless my soul!" he said, looking down. "I must teach you a few tricks, eh? . . . And you, I suppose, are Father Joseph," he went on, looking at the little fat man, who bowed and blinked.

"Priest upon priest!" cried Ratapoil. "Is this a conspiracy or a crusade? One or the other—it's all the same to me. Young fellow, put that pistol away, will you be so good? You'd never get it out in time, you know."

The other man smiled as he thrust his pistol back into the bosom of his coat; and then, shrugging his cloak aside, uncovered his other hand, which was gripping another pistol.

"Very good indeed!" said Ratapoil. "It will be a pleasure to shake you by the hand, when we have been introduced. I have developed such a poor opinion of the intelligence of the gentlemen with whom I am associated that you might easily have taken me off my guard. Introduce me to this at least moderately intelligent young fellow."

"Major Ratapoil . . . M. de Wissembourg," said M. Lemoine.

"Ah, an Alsatian name," said Ratapoil. "That accounts for your curious accent, your nice pink skin, your round blue eyes and your pretty golden moustache. Honoured to make your acquaintance, sir, enchanted . . . ! Now—" his voice changed — "you, Lemoine; you, Boutreux! And you, Father what's-your-name——"

"Joseph Marie Fernandez de Caamano, at your service," said the priest, bowing.

"Very much at my service! Why did you put this harmless young fellow with squeaky shoes to spy on me tonight?"

"Pardon me, Major Ratapoil," said de Wissembourg in his refreshingly cold, clear voice. "It is a despicable thing, to be a spy, I believe. I don't like the way you say that word, in connection with myself, sir. May I say that I believed myself to be what you call a 'spy' until you, Major Ratapoil, taught me my business tonight? I am a novice in espionage, I begin to realize; you must teach me the tricks of your dirty trade, sir."

"*Touché!*" said Ratapoil, making a gesture, as if he was lowering a foil. "Well said, my boy! To keep clean in this world a man must not be afraid of putting his hands in dirty water. I like you. But excuse me for one second. . . ." His long legs moving like a barber's scissors, seemed to snip off sixteen feet of space in a second. He was in the inner room, gripping M. Lemoine by the hand that still clutched the papers. Ratapoil said: "Come on, Monsieur Father. A surprised man reaches for two things—the thing he values most, and a weapon to defend it with. Let's have a look at that paper."

"Let him," said Boutreux..

"Excuse me if I seem somewhat abrupt," said Ratapoil, smoothing the crumpled sheets with his square, dry hand. "My manners have slipped through my fingers, somehow, in the past twenty years. . . ."

He began to read.

After a minute or two he whistled loud and long, and said: "Well, well! As the Lord is my judge, this is a formidable document!"

It was a jerkily scribbled draft of a parliamentary decree, containing nineteen articles. Ratapoil read some of them aloud—at least, audibly, in a hurried murmur, under his breath:

CONSERVATIVE SENATE

Sitting of October 22, 1812

The sitting opened at eight in the evening under the presidency of Senator Sieyes. The Senate, summoned in special session, heard the reading of a message announcing the death of the Emperor Napoleon, which took place under the walls of Moscow, on the seventh of the present month—

"Somewhat premature," said Ratapoil, in parenthesis. "We are now only at the first of the month." He read on:

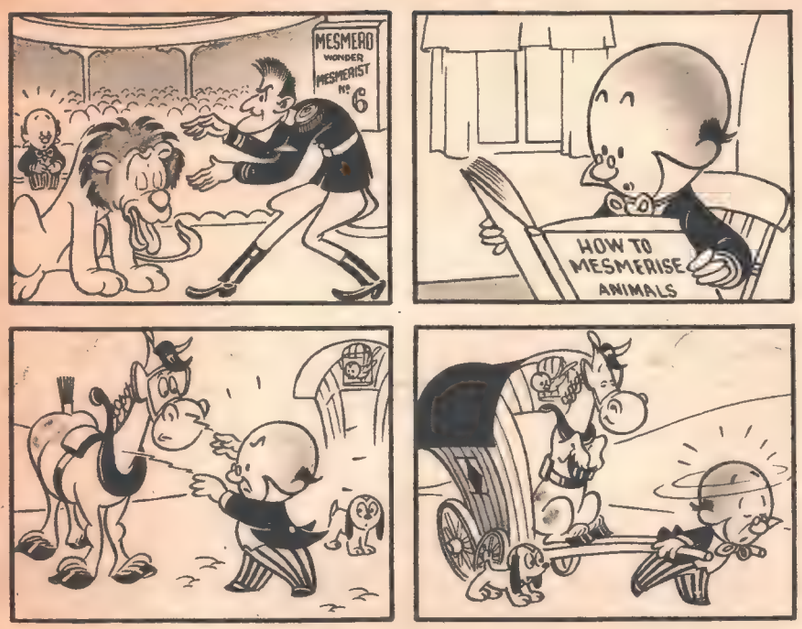
—the Senate, after deliberating over

THIS WEEK'S COVER

DOUGLAS L. MAYS, this week's cover artist, says: "My second daughter (who is thirteen) tells me that she managed to stay awake on Christmas Eve some years ago and did just what the boy on this cover is doing. But Christmas morning was such an anticlimax she decided not to do it again—even if she heard sleigh bells!"

MR. DIMPLE

by David Hand



so unexpected an event, appointed a commission to advise, at its present sitting, on the measure to be adopted, to save the country from the imminent dangers which threaten it. The recommendation of the commission having been read and discussed, it is hereby enacted and ordered as follows:

Ratapoil lit a cigar and said: "Aha! Now we come to business!"

Act 1: The Imperial Government having failed to confer on Frenchmen the peace and happiness to which they are entitled, this Government as well as its Institutions are abolished.

"That's the way to talk," said Ratapoil. "Straight to the point."

Act 2: The High Officials of the Government, whether Civil or Military, who might be tempted to use their Powers or their Titles to impede this Public Regeneration are declared Outlawed.

Act 3: The "Legion d'Honneur" is conserved.

"That's a comfort," said Ratapoil. "Ah-ah! Here we get to the meat. . . ."

Act 4: A Provisional Government is established composed of fifteen Members. . . .

Ratapoil shrugged. "What sort of Government is this?" he asked. "Moreau, President. Carnot, Vice-President. I ask you! General Augereau—that old fool, that has-been! Guyot, Bigonet, Destute Tracey, old Jacquemont, Lambrechts, Mathieu Montmorency—for Heaven's sake!—ahah, General Malet. Um-um! I see. The modest scissors cut out a row of paper dolls. Now. . . ."

Act 5: The Government is entrusted with the duty of watching over the safety of the State at home and abroad; to enter immediately into negotiations for Peace with all belligerent States; to restore to the peoples of Holland and Italy the Independence to which they are entitled.

"Just like I said," cried Ratapoil. "Eh? Ah, and here's another little thing. Oho, now I see where the priests come into this little game, Monsieur Father!"

Act 7: A Delegation will be sent to His Holiness Pope Pius VII, to beseech him, on behalf of the Nation, to kindly forget the hardships he has had to endure and to invite him to visit Paris on his return to Rome.

"Now I begin to get the lie of the land . . ." said Ratapoil, engrossed.

"*Act 8*, Ministers dismissed, discontinue their functions, remit their portfolios, etcetera. . . . *Act 9*, public servants, civil, judiciary or military, remain at their posts, though liable to be immediately outlawed should any act on their part tend to hinder *in any way* the work of the new administration. Good, good. . . . *Acts 10, 11, 12* . . . never mind. *Act 13*: So, we accord a general amnesty to all political prisoners, including émigrés, whether deserters or deported. I see. Freedom of the Press restored. . . . General Lecombe appointed Commander of a Central Army of 50,000 men. . . . Bah! Ah, wait—*this* is it——"

Act 17: General Malet will replace General Hullin as Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Paris, comprising the troops of the First Military Division. He is authorized to name the Officers who are to serve on the General Staff. He will call into Session the Members of the Provisional Government, see to their installation, and watch over their safety——

RATAPOIL nodded appreciatively. "Own them like a puppet show, in fact," he said.

All necessary Police Measures are at his disposal for this purpose. He is authorized to grant gratuities and to confer on behalf of the Nation twenty-five Orders of Chivalry upon those Citizens who, during these recent events, most notably distinguished themselves in the service of their Country. For this purpose a sum of four million francs——

"Of which, Malet hopes, at least a million will somehow dribble away into his pocket," said Ratapoil, giving the papers to Lemoine. "Never mind. It's well written and not at all badly conceived. I have begun to develop a liking for this son of a dog of a Malet, whom I have never met. Come, now. You set that pretty little pink-nosed bulldog on my heels because you thought that I might run to the police.

"I pardon your suspiciousness, but I am suspicious of your fuddled judgment. If you are the best men Malet can find, thank your gods that I am here! If not to heaven, then hand-in-hand to hell, as the English poet says! Let's let Malet loose first. Now, gentlemen—what next?"

To be continued next week

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You're only *half-enjoying* ice cream until you taste

Wall's ICE CREAM

Tommy says: "'Course we have Wall's at home! Mum says it's good for us—a proper food! So she gives it to us often at meals. Sometimes with jam or puddings. Sometimes lots of it by itself. You bet none of us is late for meals when Mum says she's going to try and get some Wall's!"

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that all ICE CREAM of our manufacture is PURE,
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MORE THAN A TREAT – *a food!*

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SENSATIONAL WASHING DISCOVERY!

Now! even matted woollens look soft as new again!

WOOLLENS YOU'D SHELVED because ordinary washing had matted them, can now look luxuriously soft again ! And that's only *one* of the exciting, wardrobe-saving blessings this amazing new washing discovery brings you. It's the fashion news of the century!

FAMOUS FASHION MODEL *Dorothy Cuff*

tells how Dreft "washed newness" into this once-discarded jumper!

" This jumper had gradually got matted and thickened by ordinary washing, you see. One day I rescued it and washed it the new, *safe way — in Dreft. See the difference ! Dreft actually* brought back *its fleecy softness ! Now it's Dreft always — especially for Baby's woollies ! "*

DOROTHY CUFF — *fashion model and housewife,* says, " Now I've seen for myself how wonderfully DREFT cares for fine clothes, I'd never dare trust my dainty things to anything else. A regular dip in gentle DREFT is my home fashion rule now. And honestly, my own woollens, silks, rayons and stockings stay just as new-looking as any I show in fashion salons. Another thing I've found — regular DREFT washing makes my dainty fabrics *last longer!* DREFT's a real wardrobe-saver!"

This Home Test Proves Dreft Washes Woollens Softer!

Take two woollens previously washed the old way. Wash one in DREFT. Compare it with the other. See? Already the DREFT-washed woollen will be softer, fleecier ! Unlike ordinary washing methods, DREFT leaves *no clothes-dulling scum.* It actually *washes away* scum left by other washing methods ! Try DREFT today — you'll love it !

★ A REGULAR DIP WITH **dreft** MAKES DAINTY FABRICS LAST LONGER!

ILLUSTRATED BY TONY WEARE

Mossy had a whisky and went in front of the curtain. That really started the crowd off

ALL TO HIS BENEFIT

by WILL SCOTT

It would need a very special show to fill the Town Hall, Mossy thought. And it was. A *very* special show

UP AT THE TOP of the bills—in very big type—it said: MR. MOSS PHIPPS PRESENTS. Lower down—in much smaller type—it said: *Acting Manager (for MR. MOSS PHIPPS), Christopher Hammer.* Mossy thought that gave things a bit of class. He didn't really need an acting manager. There was nothing to manage.

Mossy got Christopher Hammer from an advertisement in one of those actors' papers. They argued so long about terms that you'd have thought Mossy meant to pay. Mossy liked to argue. He was a dumpy little man with a pale, round face and skin that looked like a chicken's, greased and ready for the oven.

After a few weeks C. H. kicked Mossy's private door open and wanted to know what about it.

"Now, boy," said Mossy. "Now listen. I know you've been on half salary since we opened, but I want you to have a square deal."

"Sweet of you," said C. H. "But rumour suggests you never move in that direction unless solicitors are set on you first."

"Now listen, boy," said Mossy. "I've got an idea."

"I hope it's better than the idea that brought you here," said C. H. "You must have been too long in the sun when you thought you could run a repertory season in a town hall in a hole of a place like this in mid-winter."

Mossy put on a greasy smile.

"I notice you don't desert the sinking ship," he said.

C. H., dug in behind a poker face, said nothing for a second or two. It was a hit, all the same.

Because, although he was a different type, you'd no more have trusted C. H. with the filings off a penny than you'd have trusted Mossy Phipps. It puzzled a lot of people when he went on business-managing nothing. Maybe he was keeping out of somebody's way in London for a spell. It always was the sort of little town for that. C. H. wasn't the first.

"This idea?" he snapped out.

"A *Grand Benefit Night!*" said Mossy, lowering his voice impressively.

"Whose?" C. H. asked.

"Mine," said Mossy, looking surprised.

"It would be!" C. H. parked himself on the corner of Mossy's desk, pushed his hat back and said, "Tripe!"

"How d'you mean?" said Mossy.

"Grand Benefits have had it," said C. H. "Twenty years ago. You've got to be modern."

Mossy's greasy smile wagged from side to side.

"They're so old they're new, boy," he said. "And don't forget the sort of town we're in. Why, there's still a living in Punch and Judy. You go round the coast in summer and see. No, no, you're wrong. It's all a matter of advertising."

C. H. asked him what he'd got to advertise, and when Mossy told him he couldn't stop laughing for a long time. Then he asked where he came in.

"It needs a man with a way with him to make a go of a Grand Benefit," said Mossy. "I'll give you ten per cent of the 'gate' if you'll organize it. Fill the house and you're in clover. You can do it. They like you in this town. More than they like me. I don't understand it."

WELL, it stayed like that for a bit. C. H. drew up a special booking plan and began to do things properly. And Mossy breathed again. But after a few days you could tell from his face that if it went on as it was going on you could put his Grand Benefit down for the cat.

"The man's a fool!" C. H. said to a few of his townspeople pals one morning in the saloon bar of the Waterloo. "As well," he added, as if his thoughts had gone round a corner. Then, looking in his glass, and still round the corner, he said, "I never could get on with a man I couldn't *trust*."

Nobody said a word. After all, even if you didn't altogether trust C. H., you couldn't help liking him. He was handsome in a too-slick, dark-haired way, with a figure that made married women snap at their husbands. C. H. was smooth. Thirty-five he was, though he looked a bit older. Due to knocking about the world.

"Do you know what he proposes to do?" he said that morning in the Waterloo. "Get half a dozen local amateurs to put on a few extra turns for his Grand Benefit. Amateurs! And he's going to bill 'em as a Galaxy of Talent! He ought to be certified. You've got to have the attractions these days."

What happened next came out in bits afterwards.

Mossy began to whine. He said that if the bookings for his Grand Benefit didn't look up soon he didn't see how he was going to pay C. H. that five per cent extra.

"Extra to what?" C. H. said. "And did you say *five* per cent? Your memory's going, Mossy, my lad."

They argued. Mossy was good at that sort of argument. But he hadn't been up against C. H. before.

"Mossy," said C. H., all his happy smile wiped away, "do you know what I'd like to do to you? I'd like to put your face down on this desk and put my hand on the back of your head and press. Shall I show you?"

That shook Mossy. He slid back to ten per cent. He'd made up his mind he wasn't going to pay. Only it showed in his eyes, and C. H. made up *his* mind that he was. And seeing it was skin or be skinned, he took over from that point and proceeded to push a few ideas into Mr. Moss Phipps. He told him that his Galaxy of Talent didn't mean a thing to anybody. These days you had to have names. He gave examples.

"Let's stay sane, old boy," said

It's Murder when shirts shrink till they choke you! So when buying washable cottons, ask to see the "Sanforized" mark . . . your assurance the fabric can't shrink out of fit.

Garments with this label will not shrink out of fit

•SANFORIZED•
SHRUNK FABRIC

'**And don't forget**—*you should also look for the "Sanforized" label when buying pyjamas, overalls, dresses, and all washable cotton garments.*'

We modern wives insist on SUNLIGHT— because it's REAL soap

Yes, Sunlight does a better washing job because it's *pure soap*—no soda, no harmful chemicals, no misleading colouring matter. It means smoother, softer hands too!

SUNLIGHT really does the work— because it's **REAL SOAP**

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A *LEVER* PRODUCT

ALL TO HIS BENEFIT

Continued from previous page

Mossy. "They'd never come down here for one night. Not for *me*."

"They would for me," said C. H.

"But who's going to pay 'em?"

"Nobody."

"*Nobody?*"

"There's such a thing as friendship," said C. H. "And giving an old pal a helping hand. Perhaps you haven't got any pals?"

After that, Mossy gave it up and left it to C. H. He thought that such a go-getter was cheap at ten per cent. Cheaper still if you never meant to pay him.

A number of C. H.'s pals in the town had promised to buy tickets when first they heard that C. H. was on ten per cent. Promising to go, though, was another matter. They knew what to expect from the Mossy Phipps management. But now it was different.

"You're going to *see* something this time," C. H. promised them. "If you miss this you'll regret it as long as you live." And there was something in the way he said it that decided everybody.

Two days later there were bright yellow slips across the Benefit bills. They made the Galaxy of Talent look silly. There were the names of a musical comedy queen and a film star. There was Lulu Mutch from the Palladium, as well as the Nonsuch Brothers, radio's biggest hit at the time. "Positive appearance," it said over the names.

Well, the rush began, and was C. H. ready for it? He had the booking plan and a pile of tickets in a cubby hole at the town hall entrance. He also had two more booking plans under the counter, and two more piles of tickets that he'd had printed in another town. What he did was to work the three plans in rotation, and when they were full he showed Mossy just one of them and told him the Benefit was sold out.

Also he asked for his ten per cent in advance, seeing the money was in, but that didn't come off. He hadn't expected it would. But after that, no doubt, he considered his conscience was clear.

Excitement started early on the day of the big event. There was a lot of speculation about the Names. Some said they were coming from London by road and would arrive just before the show. Others said they'd already turned up and were in their dressing-rooms backstage. Nobody was very clear.

Mossy Phipps's face was a bit of a puzzle. You'd have thought he'd be highly delighted at the way things had turned out. But when he was seen looking out of a window over the town hall portico, just before seven o'clock, he didn't appear to be highly delighted. He looked most unhappy. He kept asking for C. H. But nobody knew where C. H. was.

By half-past seven you couldn't see the road or pavement outside the town hall. Most people thought that most people had come to see the rest of them go in, or perhaps catch a glimpse of the Names. But when the doors opened it seemed that most people had come to go in. There were tickets waving all over the place.

The trouble began with Councillor Brasshead's seats in the front row. He was chairman of the council that year and he had already been put out because the bills had said nothing about his distinguished patronage. Now he had turned up in all his glory to find his seats occupied. The squatters had tickets, too. Just like his. And while he was arguing about it somebody else turned up behind him with a third claim to the very same seats.

Councillor Brasshead turned up his voice and made a speech about bad management. He demanded to see Mr. Moss Phipps. Mr. Moss Phipps, who had worries that nobody else knew about for the moment, sent word back referring Councillor Brasshead to his acting manager, Mr. Christopher Hammer.

"Very well," Councillor Brasshead stormed. "Where *is* Mr. Christopher Hammer?" And that was soon the big question. Where *was* Mr. Christopher Hammer? Because by now two or three people were laying claim to every single seat in the house. And hundreds of tickets were still being waved outside.

Mossy was too old a hand not to see what had happened. He went out on the portico and addressed the populace. He said it looked very much as if his acting manager had sold some hundreds of tickets more than there were seats for and had then quietly taken his departure.

When it was well into their heads somebody let out a yell for his money back. Then they were all at it. Which turned Mossy Phipps a miserable grey colour.

"But I haven't got the money!" he said. "He's taken it!"

A more popular man than Mossy would have had everybody with him there. But he wasn't built to be liked. The crowd wanted their money back. C. H. wasn't there. Mossy was. Therefore they wanted their money back from him. The argument was as simple as that. Besides, somebody said, it was, after all, his Benefit.

Mossy went inside and slammed the door over the portico. It was ten past eight and the show hadn't started. There was a lot of noise coming from the auditorium. Mossy took a very stiff whisky and went in front of the curtain. In reply to a question he said that no Names had arrived and it now looked to him as if no Names were going to arrive.

That started it.

At first there was just a lot of bawling. Then somebody threw something. Then the whole place was in an uproar, which spread outside and washed round the town hall like a spring tide.

Mossy locked himself in the room over the portico and wondered how he was going to get the last train out of the town.

He was still there in the morning. So were the police. So were thirty or forty lookers-on, waiting to say goodbye to Mossy. But he didn't, as things turned out, catch the first train. He caught the second. In a rather ragged condition.

He might have been all right but for the post card. Afterwards it looked as if C. H. had gone away with the post card all ready to post in London in time for it to reach the town hall by first delivery.

It was a safe guess that Mossy would never get away before morning and would be there when the card turned up. And it was another safe guess that everybody would soon know what was on that card. You can't send an open post card to a little town and expect nobody to read it.

Anyway, what it said in that post card was: "Got here okay. Meet you Susie's as arranged as soon as things are quiet. C. H."

And even if Mossy Phipps could have explained, he wasn't given the chance. Like one man they were at him.

It was sheer good luck that he made that second train at all.

WRITE TO JOHN BULL ABOUT IT

READERS with personal problems can obtain the help of *John Bull*'s team of experts. Inquiries (other than medical) should be addressed to the *John Bull* Free Advice Service, 189 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. Enclose a stamped, addressed envelope for reply.

Sir Stanley Rous (left), soccer's "ambassador," discusses plans for an F.A. team tour in Canada next year

Full-time Soccer fan

by STANLEY RUSSELL

The F.A. secretary is no rubber stamp official. He's a practical man who has simplified the book of rules and done much to improve the game

TWENTY YEARS AGO pupils at the Grammar School in Watford groused about the school's games master, who insisted that every one of the 700 scholars should turn out for compulsory games every week unless medically excused. It did not occur to them that the games master's action might fall into the "this hurts me more than it does you" category. For the school game was rugby; his preference was for soccer.

Today the games master is Sir Stanley Rous, secretary of the Football Association, and responsible for organizing one of soccer's greatest events—the F.A. Cup contest.

This gigantic tournament is taken in the F.A.'s dignified but well-directed stride. Immediately after the draw for each round is completed a special referees' committee of the F.A. appoints the officials. It is a tribute to the committee's efficiency that no referee has refused a Cup-Tie appointment.

On rare occasions a club asks for a referee to be changed. Only if he once lived near one of the competing clubs in the match or was a known supporter is any alteration made; mere dislike of the man, or even allegations concerning his efficiency, will have no effect.

Up to fifteen years ago, Stanley Ford Rous was himself one of the best-known referees in the country: he developed the diagonal system of control which all referees now use. Between 1927 and 1934 he refereed thirty-four international matches between Continental teams, a record still unapproached by any other Englishman.

Eventful Week

His refereeing career ended suddenly after a wonderful week at the end of the 1933-34 season.

That week he drove from Watford, his home, to Wrexham for the Welsh Cup Final, a mid-week match, and while there read that Sir Frederick Wall was retiring from the secretaryship of the F.A., which was inviting applications by the following Saturday for succession to the post.

Rous decided to apply, wrote out his qualifications, and, reaching London on the Friday afternoon, dropped the envelope through the letter box of the magnificent porticoed house in Lancaster Gate that was, and still is, the F.A. offices.

Next day he refereed the Manchester City-Portsmouth final at Wembley and then crossed the Channel for a Belgium-Holland game on the Sunday.

At the end of that match a Belgian official shocked the assembled dignitaries and officials by saying: "Well, Mr. Rous, I hope we have seen the last of you as a referee here." He added quickly, in a stage aside, that a little bird had been whispering.

Rous himself knew nothing of developments. But within a few weeks he had been appointed secretary of the Association.

The jump from controlling twenty-two players on the field to organizing five or six thousand professionals from behind an office desk was prodigious. Of course, he made enemies.

There were sly digs at "Schoolmaster Rous." Some failed to distinguish between a dictator and an extremely efficient organizer; others declared that he was out to use his position to his own advantage.

Now he is universally respected: no martinet but a courteous listener who moves quickly to right wrongs, who regularly achieves the near-miracle of being in two places almost simultaneously; a man who, besides possessing an all-embracing memory and a knack of attending to the minutest details, has an unquenchable enthusiasm for improving the game and the conditions of its players.

Rous is probably the world's greatest traveller in the name of sport. His advice is sought by football organizations all over the globe.

In one recent week his diary engagements included three visits to the north of England; almost every evening he attends some function in his official capacity. Once he went to a mental hospital to present prizes won in a football tournament, and met a man who gave him an accurate, if rambling, account of the work of the F.A. When, eventually, the man paused for breath, Sir Stanley interjected: "Yes, I know all that. I am the F.A. secretary."

The man gazed at him in silence for a moment. Then, lifting his eyebrows, he said politely: "Really? You know, when I first came here I thought I was Napoleon, but they ruddy soon cured me of that idea."

Prizegiving and lecturing are only part of his extra-office activities. Ten years ago he re-wrote the laws of the game in a simplified form.

Gadget Enthusiast

He has been behind many experiments with new types of boot and ball and with luminous flags for use in murky weather. He is also an enthusiast for gadgets that speed up office routine. (He needs them: from now on, one of his two secretaries will be exclusively employed regretfully refusing applications for Cup Final tickets, which the F.A. does not issue direct to the public.)

His refereeing career is the theme of many of his stories. One of the best is a favourite of modern referees, for whom it has a particular homely ring.

Rous was refereeing a match in the north of England and the crowd disapproved of so many of his decisions that they booed him at the finish. To avoid possible trouble, two policemen escorted him off the field. On arriving safely at his dressing-room he turned to them and said: "Thanks very much for your help."

"That's all right, sir," replied one. "We're used to leading the blind."

Though Rous tells this joke against himself, most people inside football know him as a practical man who gets things done quickly.

The manager of a club 150 miles from London wrote to the F.A. the night before an important match on his ground. Shortly before the kick-off he met the F.A. secretary, who told him: "I've received your letter. The answer is in the post."

The astonished manager commented afterwards: "He must be up with the milkman. He had to leave London by nine o'clock to get here."

Lives Over Office

The guess was practically dead on target. Sir Stanley lives in a flat above his office, breakfasts by seven forty-five and has sorted most of his mail by eight o'clock. He dictates his replies on to a machine ("one of my gadgets"), so that when his secretaries arrive they need not complain of lack of work.

He hates rubber stamps and makes a point of signing personally, if possible, every letter that goes out in his name. It is more than courtesy; it is a way of keeping a light touch on what is happening.

A lot of his office work is done late at night. But any member of the public who thinks that a late telephone call will find the F.A. secretary more receptive to pleas about Cup Final tickets will be disappointed. The number isn't in the book.

Join the New Year Fun!

AS you see, a right royal time was enjoyed by JOHN BULL's guests at the 37th birthday party of *Bullets* recently. The next celebration will be a New Year party and six more invitations will go out to winners in the contest now before you.

Read about the thrills awaiting our New Year guests—then use some of your Christmas leisure to win a big cheque and a celebration weekend. Awaiting the sender of this contest's best *Bullet* is £500 cash, and a few well-chosen words, entered on your coupon below can make that fortune yours!

"BULLETS" 1st PRIZE

£500 CASH PLUS NEW YEAR CELEBRATION WEEKEND

£50, £25—each plus

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Winners and chosen companions will be invited to JOHN BULL's New Year celebration party in London. Arrangements include conducted tour of London, trip to Windsor, seats for Olympia Circus and celebration lunch to meet Johnny Goodbullet, the *Bullets* bulldog. (Extra cheque if preferred to Weekend Award.)

2 of £10, 5 of £5, 10 of £2 10s. each plus NEW YEAR HAMPER

30 NEW YEAR HAMPERS

2,000 "Good Shot" Prizes

New Year Bonus—See coupon below

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee, enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this page's Contests in *Bulletin* and *Gazette* dated Jan. 21 and in JOHN BULL dated Jan. 28, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

ADD 2, 3 or 4 WORDS to any of these "EXAMPLES"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* on right. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

Along The 1950 Road	Landlord Sandy
Freedom's Fortress	Didn't Try
Bigger Man	Mid-week Football
Keep Your Chin Up And	A Catastrophe
Progressing	Convinced
Customer Sam	The Villagers
In The World Of Science	Beauty And The Beast
Home To Her	Incomplete "Examples"—see Instructions
Made All The Difference	Industry's.....
Groundnuts	The.....Of Life
The Day Will Come When	Wondering If It's.....
	Must Have....., But
Sorely Needed	Nothing To.....
Burnt His Fingers	In The.....Department

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2 BIG CHEQUES WON—XWORD 660

WINNING WORDS. ACROSS: 1 Cash. 3, Beard. 5, Face. 7, State. 8, Sale. 12, Debut. 13, Gale. DOWN: 1, Crises. 2, Show. 4, Duet. 6, Wafer. 9, Will. 10, Fore. 11, Root. 12, Dot.

TWO £100 SHARERS (differing at one point only from competitors' Answers above): W. Grounds, Isfryn, Queen Street, Rhos, nr. Wrexham; D. A. Roberts, 30 Penallt Terrace, Llanelly, Carms.

Awards value £25 for 1st Runners-up shared by 41 entrants (differing at two points only from Answers above). Useful "Signpost" Prizes awarded to 2nd Runners-up. In addition, Winners and 1st Runners-up receive Double Christmas Feasts.

"Bullets" Winners 1,708

FIRST PRIZE, £500 plus Christmas Turkey: A. E. Noble, 53 Twentieth Avenue, Blyth, Northumberland: SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS "KID'S STUFF," WITHOUT KIDS

SECOND PRIZE, £50 plus Christmas Turkey: L. W. H. Emmerson, Hanworth House, Holt, Norfolk: WITHOUT HESITATION—I'D STAMMER PROPOSAL AGAIN!

THIRD PRIZE, £25 plus Christmas Turkey: D. Mackey, 23 Cambridge Street, Wolverton, Bletchley: GREETED WITH CHEERS—OF HECKLERS, TOO—WINSTON!

OTHER AWARDS. £20: J. Kirwan, 14 Princess Street, Wolverhampton: COULD BE THE WORKERS' — GREATEST "CLAIM," *Britain's* "RISE." £15: J. MacFarlane, Geraldine Staff Club, Barnards Green, Malvern: SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS—LOST? ASK A *Postman*! £10: G. H. Churchill, 2 Cotham Grove, Bristol, 6: THE PEACE PUDDING—OFF—*Peace* NEEDS BRANDY! £9: J. Jones, 53 Eighth Avenue, Bristol, 7: COULD BE THE WAY—*You* SPOKE, HURT *You*. £8: E. H. Oliver, Bear Close, Woodstock, Oxford: GHOST OF THE PAST—FORTUNE HE'D "WALKED THROUGH." £7: E. W. Wallis, 17 Avenue Terrace, York: IN THE EAST—WIND, "KNIVES"—LOOK SHARP! £6: E. Sinfield, Y.M.C.A., Harper Barracks, Ripon: STEPPED ON THE AIR—AND *Tree* "DECORATED" *Father*!

Above 7 winners each also receives Christmas Turkey.

For 5 winners of £5 plus Turkey, and 5 of £2 10s. plus Turkey, see last week's "*Bullets*" *Bulletin*.

Winners of 25 further Turkeys and 100 Fowls have been notified and 2,000 "Good Shots" posted.

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THIS WAY TO WIN

FIRST complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues on right. Then, if you wish to enter *one* extra Answer to any *one*, *two* or *three* Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

Across Clues XWORD 664

1. It is hoped that they will solve the dollar problem in time
6. Motorists find them rather more expensive these days
9. It takes quite a bit of money to run several of these
11. Nation's well-being can be improved by quality of this
13. Some hubbies find themselves forced to part with
14. Since the war, there have been big shocks for people living in this

Down Clues

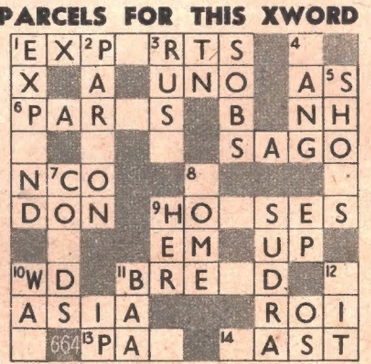
1. Small business man often finds he has little money to
2. There are times when one has to beg
3. Protecting cover may be good enough to withstand this
4. It's a bit risky when one gets loose
5. Some do well even in really bad weather
7. Singers, in particular, should nurse them
8. Can be a surprisingly disappointing building
10. Selfish, unscrupulous people find it easier to make this
12. Is an incalculable asset to theatre

£100 AND FOOD PARCELS FOR THIS XWORD

In adjudication, all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.), Square with one extra Answer to *two* Clues will represent *four* full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.), and Square with one extra Answer to *three* Clues will represent *eight* full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.). Use ink, not pencil.

Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps, covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated January 14.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature below is agreement to Rules.



CLUE	EXTRA ANSWER	Total Fee
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No.		1s.
No.		2s.

(Total fee shown includes entry on Square)

I enclose P.O. value.....

No. .....

Signed .....

Address.....

.....

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664 Closing Postmark MON., JAN 2

HOW A GIRL BECOMES A NUN

Continued from page 8

black beads, and a crucifix kept at the waist ready to be put to the lips of a sick person at the point of death.

Thenceforward she would never be other than poor, chaste and obedient. All she would ever possess would be the articles of her habit, and those, too, would be interchangeable; any money she may have brought with her went into the funds of the convent at Wanstead.

She had renounced the world, accepting the Rule of her Order which ordains that for the rest of her life she would sleep on a simple, hard bed, in a bare, unheated "cell"; eat only at meal times, off uncovered, wooden boards, never speaking except on feast days; never enter a restaurant or spend a night in a hotel; never go out unless accompanied by another nun, except in an emergency; and never look back as she walks along the road.

Her letters are not private; perhaps once before she dies will she be allowed home to visit her parents. Her life is completely ordered.

Day-dreaming is discouraged; the rule directs that she must concentrate on the matter in hand, be it her prayers, work or recreation. There is plenty of time to meditate, but then her thoughts must be directed towards God and His Divine Will, the mysteries of religion, and her sins and imperfections.

The Mother Superior

When she is old enough to accept responsibility, Sister Annunciata could be made Mother Superior of the convent—for five years, after which she would hand over her command and authority to sign cheques to another nun and slip back again into the anonymous ranks of the sisters.

One day perhaps she will be too old to be useful as a teacher. Then she will retire to less responsible but no less arduous household and menial duties. She will visit the poor or sick in their homes. If she is lucky she may be made sacristan of the chapel.

The chances are she will die peacefully in her bed Her coffin will be a simple dealwood affair, and there'll be a grave for her in the nuns' plot in the public cemetery. There are no "ifs" or "buts" about Sister Annunciata's renunciation.

"What do I miss?" she asks, repeating the question. "Well, I don't miss cinemas or dances because I never had much of that, living as we did in the country. Sometimes I miss my home and family, at Christmas time especially. But most of the time I'm too busy to miss anything."

Sister Annunciata hopes to finish her training at Endsleigh next July, and then return to St. Joseph's. "I want to teach eight-year-olds," she says. "I think I've always wanted to teach very young children. Maybe, one day, you'll send me yours?" She smiles, shyly.

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Happy Christmas - - -

happy problems - presents

for others, good fare for

ourselves. Ingredients

for pudding and cake to buy,

the bird to order, candles

& crackers, gifts for the

family and friends -

these to get, too. How lucky

the C.W.S make or supply

everything we need

and there are C.W.S goods in

abundance at our

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